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TOWN OF MICHIGAN

The City of Magnificent Distances

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The town of Michigan, like Cinderella or Horatio Alger, grew from rags to riches, from a virtual wilderness and swamp to one of the principal cities in the State of Michigan. The site that was to become the location of the state capitol had no knowledge of its destiny, and was in no position to prepare for the future.

There may have been some preparation however, thousands of years ago when the entire State of Michigan was covered with a blanket of ice. It may be that the glaziers were to cover an ugliness that had been in existence at one time, and that the gradual recession of the blanket of ice would permit the formation of new features that would add to the beauty of the country. Plains, hills, mountains and valleys were formed by the receding ice. The course of rivers underwent a drastic change and we know the Grand River as it appears today is little changed from its course of a hundred years ago. Vegetation returned to cover the bare earth and provide a means of existence for man and animal.

The land was again inhabited by animal, and man whom we know as the American Indian. The Jesuit priests in their exploration in the early 1600's found the American Indian in northern Michigan and later explorations by the French claimed this country for France. Little recognition was given to the claims of Chippewas or Ojibway, the Potawatomi and Ottawa Indian tribes, who in their own right held the land as their home.

The "bend in the river" as the Grand River at this point was recognized, was little changed. The river was used as a means of transportation by the Indian and his canoe, the banks little traversed by man, due to the thick swamps. A portage was located at Glen Island. This island is still in existence below the dam at Moores River Park. Here the Indian crossed the river and proceeded along a trail which ran over the uplands between the streets now known as Walnut Street and Capitol Avenue. He again crossed the river at another portage located below the dam in North Lansing.

The wars between the French and the British had little or no effect on this area nor was it affected by a band of marauding Spaniards who captured a fort at Niles in Southwestern Michigan. The "bend in the river"



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could not stay undisturbed for long, however, as the land bordering the Great Lakes was being settled and it would not be long before it would be developed.

Law and a form of government was unheard of and it was not until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, when the French transferred various possessions to the Crown of Great Britain, that Upper Canada which included Michigan was considered in British Parliament and a form of law provided for control and development. Representatives were sent to carry out the directives of the Crown but by their own commitment their greatest concern was the management of the savages.

By the Ordinance of 1787, the Northwest territory was established and a system of government provided under the direction of the governor and judges. It was not until after the Jay Treaty early in July 1796, however, that Detroit and Mackinac were turned over to the United States by the British Government and on July 15, 1796, Governor Arthur St. Clair (General), proclaimed Michigan together with part of Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin as Wayne County.

In 1816, Indiana separated from the Territory and became a State, as did Ohio in 1803. The Territorial Government of Michigan was duly organized by the Governor and Judges at Detroit on June 30, 1805. The State of Michigan now had a name and could be recognized. It was not until December 24, 1814, however, at which time the Treaty of Ghent was signed that the war with England was formally closed.

In the development of the Northwest Territory the Indian had to be dealt with and it was in 1795 that a treaty was held at Greenville and parts of the Northwest Territory was released. Another treaty, the Treaty of Detroit, was made with the Indians in 1807, which included all the Southeastern part of the Lower Peninsula, east of the principle meridian and south of a line drawn northeasterly from a point on the meridian line that was due west of the mouth of the St. Clair River to White Rock on Lake Huron.

With the release of this land the United States was in a position to begin the survey of the Michigan Territory so that lands could be sold. A contract was made with Benjamin Houghs in 1815, for the survey of the True Meridian and the survey began at Fort Defiance, at the mouth of the Auglaize River and ran due north on Longitude $84^{\circ} 22' 24''$ west of Greenwich. The contract for the second control or the Base Line was let to Alexander Holmes in 1815 and was located on Latitude $42^{\circ} 26' 30''$ north of the equator.

The Saginaw Treaty was signed in 1819, and included that part of the Michigan Territory north of that part released in the Treaty of Detroit and to the north and easterly of a line beginning at a point 6 miles south of the base line on the Principal Meridian and running thence due west 60 miles thence northeasterly to the headwaters of the Thunder Bay River, thence down stream to Lake Huron. This was the first treaty to include the "bend in the river". The Treaty of Chicago in 1821, included that

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part of territory west of the meridian and south of the Grand River except a small area in the extreme southwest party of the Territory. The Treaty of Washington in 1836, included that part of the Territory north of the Grand River, and north and westerly of a line, drawn from a point on the meridian where it was crossed by the Grand River, thence northly to the headwaters of the Thunder Bay River, thence down river to the Lake Huron. Each of these treaties included a part of the Bend of the River. The Treaty of 1821, included that part south of the River, and the Treaty of 1836, that part north of the River.

As these treaties were signed the area was opened for survey so that the lands could be sold. As a result Lucius Lyon received a contract in 1825, to survey the exterior lines of what was to be Lansing Township. Musgrove Evans was awarded the contract to survey the interior of this Township in 1826, and for the first time we had a record of what was located here.

Lucius Lyon and his survey crew experienced great hardship in this and his other surveys. With the primitive instruments which were available at that time they were able to accomplish excellent control points which are the basis of our property lines today. A stake was set at each section corner or each mile and also at each half-mile or quarter-corner. Bearing or witness trees were recorded to control the location of each stake that was set. This record together with the comment made by Mr. Lyon as to the type of timber along his survey lines, enables us to identify the type of country as it existed at that time.

In running north on the east line of the township, now Lansing Township, which would be along Abbott Road, extended north and south, Lucius Lyon crossed rolling first class land with some swamp areas south of the River. On the north side of the River the land changed to second and third rate. The entire course along the south boundary, now Cavanaugh Road, was over first rate land. In running the west boundary of the Township, north along what is now Waverly Road, he crossed rolling first class land. The north boundary was somewhat different as it crossed low level marsh land to the east and the westerly part was rolling second class. The principal types of timber found along these survey lines were: ash, beech, elm ironwood, sugar, aspen with no particular reference to special stands of timber.

The same is true of the survey made by Musgrove Evans, only in this case we have a more complete picture in that from the records of Mr. Evans, we are able to recognize points where stakes were set to form the boundary of section 16, which was to be selected for the location of the Town of Michigan.

Mr. Evans first set the southeast corner of section 16 at the intersections of what are St. Joseph and East streets. The witness trees at this point were a 12-inch beech tree and a 16-inch maple tree with the notation that the type of timber growth was, "oak, beech, etc., good rolling land". On running north on the line, east side of section 16, he

entered swamp at the intersections of Michigan Avenue and East Street. Witness trees at this point, a quarter-corner, were a 10-inch swamp oak and a 13-inch black oak. Approximately a block north of Michigan Avenue he left the swamp and crossed a creek, he continued on to the northeast section corner which was set at the intersection of what is now East and Saginaw streets. At this section corner the witness trees were an 18-inch oak and a 15-inch white oak, his comments were that the timber was "oak, beech, ash, and etc., and that the land was second rate".

The next corner to be located with respect to section 16 was southwest corner located at the intersection of the streets now named Division and St. Joseph. The witness trees here were a 24-inch beech tree and a 3-inch beech tree with the notation that the land was very good.

Instead of running the north and south line on the west side of the section the next line to be run was the south line of section 16 and this would be along St. Joseph Street. The land was good, dry land and the timber growth, oak, sugar and beech. The south quarter corner was set at the intersection of Washington Avenue and St. Joseph streets on the west side of the street. The witness trees at this corner were a 4-foot, 8-inch white oak and a 7-inch beech.

After establishing the corrected south line of section 16, the west line of the section was run and the quarter corner set at the intersection of West Michigan Avenue and the back lot line of those lots on the west side of Sycamore Street. This is of course approximate, inasmuch as Division Street does not appear here. In the replatting of the area, this street was vacated. Witness trees at this corner were a 22 inch black oak and a 6-inch beech.

Continuing north on the section line the northwest corner was set in Saginaw Street where it joins the court that runs north and south between Sycamore Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the east side of the court. The land at this point was indicated as being very good with timber growth of sugar, lynn and beech and an undergrowth of spice. From this point, the north line of section was run east along Saginaw Street with the quarter corner being set on the west side of Washington Avenue, where it intersected Saginaw Street. Here the witness trees were a 6-inch beech and a 24-inch beech.

The line continued east on Saginaw Street across the River to East Street. Here we have the boundary lines of section 16, Saginaw and St. Joseph streets, the north and south lines and East and Division streets, the east and west line. The north and south quarter line being Washington Avenue and the east and west quarter line being Michigan Avenue.

The records show that there was extensive swamp along the river through section 16 and the the uplands supported an excellent growth of timber. This is shown by the fact that one of the witness trees on the south side of section 16, at the intersection of Washington Avenue and St. Joseph Street was a white oak, 4-feet and 8-inches in diameter. A similar tree was cut

down in 1949 when the State Journal cleared ground for its new building at the corner of Grand Avenue and Lenawee Street. A cross section of that tree is at present exhibited in the lobby of the State Journal building and is approximately 4 feet in diameter with an estimated age of 137 years. It is to be remembered, however, that this tree was probably a mere sapling when the witness tree referred to above was marked during the survey in 1826.

With the completion of the surveys, lands were placed on the market by the United States Land Office. The sale of land attracted people who moved in to settle the country. Roads were built and settlements located, dams and mills were built along the rivers. The rivers were also used as highways for transportation. This included the Grand River which was one of the main traveled highways. The area all around The Bend in the River developed. Roads were constructed to the north and south, however, there was no development in the immediate vicinity of The Bend in the River. Lands in this area were sold however, in that the land was recognized as being desirable.

Under the provisions of the Ordinance of Michigan in 1805, section 16 of each township was set aside to be sold and the revenue to be used for school purposes, therefore, there was no early sale of this land.

With the development of the southern part of the State there came a need for a form of government and a tax to help support the government of the Territory. As a result the Territorial Laws of Michigan were developed in many instances as a continuation of the Original Territorial Laws.

The Council of the Territory of Michigan laid out the boundaries of Ingham County together with other counties in 1829, and in November of the same year combined the counties of Ingham, Jackson and Washtenaw as one judicial district for administration of the Territorial Laws. With all forms of government, revenue is required to support the various needs of the people. This requirement is no different than that of the early rulers, kings, or other supervising groups of people. Under the Territorial Laws, taxes were collected to support the government. This practice continued with the organization of the Michigan Territory.

The method of collecting and providing forfeiture methods were improved in the development of laws for the control of Michigan as a State. Taxes were assessed on various items and the people were required to pay or the property on which the tax was delinquent was to be sold in accordance with the terms of the law. The sale was usually held by the sheriff.

At this time the only lands which were available for sale were those which were sold by the United States Land Office. As soon as surveys were complete, lands were offered to the public and soon the interest became so great that additional land offices were opened to provide for the need of the settlers.

In 1836, the south half of section 9, T. 4N, R. 2W, was purchased from the United States by Mr. Samuel Bushnell, and the north half of section

21 T. ⁴N, R. 2W, was purchased by Mr. Wm. H. Townsend. Both of the tracts of land were to become involved in the early history of Lansing.

There was another tract of land that is included in the history of Lansing and that is the south half of section 21. This was purchased by Jerry and William Ford from the United States, March 15, 1836. The Ford brothers came to examine their purchase and obtained the service of a guide from around DeWitt, who brought the brothers to the north bank of the Grand River on/or about Main Street and Capitol Avenue. From there the brothers were able to look over their purchase. Their land began at about the present Grand Trunk Railroad ^{& South Washington St.} and extended south to Mt. Hope Avenue and supported a swamp type growth of timber.

Apparently satisfied with their purchase, the brothers returned East to arrange for their land to be platted into lots and blocks. The name of Biddle City was given to this area and the lots were sold to the public outside of Michigan Territory. It appears that there was no interest by the ones who purchased the property in that no taxes were paid and as a result, the property was sold for taxes. This plat was vacated.

It was at this time that the State of Michigan made its bid for statehood and was formally declared a state by Act of Congress, January 26, 1837. Sales of land by the United States continued and Jacob F. Cooley purchased the west half of the southwest quarter and the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 30, T. ⁴N, R. 2W, from the United States, May 2, 1837, and made his home on the land on the bank of the Grand River. Though his purchase may not have been the first in this area, he undoubtedly was the first permanent settler.

There were not very many people settled in Ingham County, however, it was formally separated from Jackson and Washtenaw counties on April 5, 1838, when it was organized as an independent County. During the same session of Legislature, provision was made for the organization of Alameda Township which was to include four survey townships, townships 3 and 4 North Range, 1 and 2 W. T. 4N, R. 2W was later to become Lansing Township. Settlers began to travel north out of Jackson, which was on the road from Detroit to Chicago, one of the main traveled roads.

We find a record in the register of deeds office in Mason, the County Seat of Ingham County, a partition deed, dated September 10, 1839, in which James Seymour, Monroe County, New York and other heirs of Samuel Bushnell, are named as beneficiaries in the settlement of the Bushnell estate.

With other lands, Mr. Seymour, acquired the south half of section 9, T. 4N, R. 2W, which would lie north of and adjacent to Saginaw Street between East Street and Division Street. Mr. Seymour was to take a prominent part in the promotion and development of Lansing Township which was now organized as an independent Township, by Act of Legislature, February 16, 1842. The records indicate that the first meeting of the Township was held at the Shantee near the Cedar River bridge.

In 1843, John Burchard, a young lawyer who had been living in Mason, recognized the water power potential on the Grand River near North Lansing so he purchased those rights from Mr. Seymour, then the owner of the south half of section 9. Mr. Burchard moved his family to what is now North Lansing and built a cabin on the east side of the river to the easterly or present dam site on the Grand River at North Lansing. He built his dam in 1844 and in the spring, floods damaged it. Mr. Burchard was carried over the dam in the flood waters and drowned. The Burchard family returned East leaving a dream for another to fulfill.

Mr. Seymour then hired Joab Page to repair and strengthen the dam. This was followed by the construction of a sawmill and later a gristmill. The Page family had taken possession of the cabin built by Burchard, and being at the point on the river used as a portage and the only dwelling in miles, provided accommodations for the few travelers who passed that way.

In the original Constitution of the State, when it was organized, one of the requirements was that the seat of the government would be at Detroit but that a permanent location would be made by the year 1847. Therefore, when the Legislature convened in 1847, the location of the Capitol was in the order of business. It was only natural that the gentlemen of Wayne County would attempt to retain the Capitol in the City of Detroit, as it was the only City of any consequence in the State, the remainder being virtually a wilderness. This, however, was not the general feeling of the other members. As a result, a number of other locations were suggested as a possible site for the Capitol.

To promote development near his holdings, Mr. Seymour offered a part of his land for the location of the Capitol. This would probably be that part of the south half of section 9 that lay north of Saginaw Street. In order to convince the Legislature that his land was a desirable site, Mr. Seymour prepared a map on which he showed the location of Lansing Township with a star and red lines to other cities with their distances noted. It is the feeling that this exhibit helped in the final determination of the Capitol's location.

_____ Kilbourn amended the original bill considered by inserting the name of Lansing Township as the location of the Capitol. Despite considerable dissention, the bill was finally passed and signed by Governor _____, March 16, 1847.

Little was expected of the locating of the Capitol in a swamp in Central Michigan--it could never last. The Legislature attempted to see that it would not, by reducing the appropriation for the construction of a Capitol building from \$100,000 to \$10,000, and providing only nine months in which to construct the new Capitol building in Lansing Township.

After signing the bill, Governor _____, appointed a committee of three to select the site for the Capitol, one of whom was James L. Glen. They were directed to proceed to Lansing Township as soon as weather permitted.

To make sure that all available public land would be considered, the Legislature, by joint resolution, November 22, 1847, required the Auditor General to withhold from sale, all tax delinquent lands and the Commissioner of the State Land Office was to withhold from sale, all state-owned lands in Lansing Township. This included section 16 which had been set aside for school purposes.

The committee traveled to Lansing Township in early spring and met Joab Page who was to show them the land that had been offered by Mr. Seymour, presumably the south half of section 9 or the land north of and adjacent to Saginaw Street. The committee experienced considerable hardship in that the country was what it had been said to be--a dense forest with numerous sturdy oak similar to that referred to in Mr. Evans' notes on the survey of the south line of section 16--oaks 4 feet, 8 inches in diameter. A swamp area extended all along the east side of the Grand River. This can be observed today as the low area that extends on either side of Michigan Avenue and back as far as Cedar Street.

When the first bridge was built across the Grand River at Michigan Avenue, the approach from the east was fill from Cedar Street to the bridge abutment. The extent of the fill can be observed today at the city parking lot across from building formerly occupied by Sears and Roebuck and the viaduct for the railroad track at Mill Street. This low area supported a dense growth of swamp timber and brush. This area was also subject to flooding as even we, of later years, have experienced.

The committee arrived for their appointment with Mr. Page, portaged the river north of the dam, for there were no bridges, to reach Mr. Seymour's land and the desirable part of section 16. Other locations were examined in Lansing Township and the committee finally made their selection of the Capitol site in section 16 lying west of Grand River.

A stake was driven in the ground for the Capitol site in early May, 90 rods west of the river on the east and west quarter line, which is now Michigan Avenue and 30 acres were set aside for the Capitol grounds and park site. The 30 acres selected, started at a point 20 rods south of the east and west quarter line on the west bank of the Grand River and ran west 122 rods, along what is now Allegan Street to Walnut Street; north 40 rods along Walnut Street to Ottawa Street; east on Ottawa Street, 127 rods, to the river and south to the place of beginning.

There was naturally a celebration with the locating of the Capitol site and it is not unreasonable to believe that there were some new faces in the area who wanted to be in on the ground floor so to speak. The bill locating the Capitol had been signed in March and there had been ample time for speculators to explore the area by the time the committee members arrived.

Inasmuch as the land selected was State land, the State was then required to make a plat subdividing the section into lots. Mr. _____ Silvers, State Land Commissioner, proceeded to do this and the plat of the

Town of Michigan was placed on record. It covered the entire section 16, Michigan Avenue being on the east and west quarter line and the north and south quarter line lying along the west side of Washington Avenue. To make sure that a control was maintained for the future surveys a large stone was placed at the intersection of Washington and Saginaw streets, Washington Street and Michigan Avenue and at Washington and St. Joseph streets. An "X" was scribed in the stones which were sunk a foot below the surface, to mark the intersecting lines north, south, east and west.

Practically no timber had been cut in section 16--this would have been in trespass on State land. Timber, however, had been cut by Mr. Page on Mr. Seymour's land and in particular at the location of the dam and sawmill.

Mr. Page more or less turned his home into a hotel as it was probably the only cabin here. Not for long, however, as a building boom was in progress at The Bend of the River. Homes were built--the first construction being at North Lansing near the portage as there was still no bridge over the Grand River. A bridge had been constructed across the river at Cedar Street in 1841, and a trail road was located along what is now Cedar Street.

Turner built the first frame house in North Lansing on Turner Street between Franklin--now Grand River Avenue and Dodge Street. The committee charged with the building of the Capitol had just a short time in which to complete the building for occupancy. Here it was May--and the location had just been selected.

With the completion of the plat, the builders moved in. The block fronting on Washington between Allegan and Washtenaw Streets was selected for the temporary Capitol. The building was set well back off of Washington in the center of the block and facing Washington Avenue. Timber was cleared and construction began. Payment for the lumber for the Capitol, produced at the sawmill of Mr. Page, was authorized by Resolution No. 55 by the Legislature in 1848. The material for finishing the trim on the inside of the Capitol was freighted in.

This was just a beginning as there was considerable activity in private interests. With the plat being completed, Mr. _____ Silvers, State Land Office Commissioner, was required to have the lots appraised. For this purpose he selected John M. French, Richard Ferris, and Joseph L. Huntington, who personally examined and appraised each lot.

There was also the problem of planning what property the Town of Michigan would reserve for parks, churches and school sites. As a result of planning, Block 78 and 79, Ferris Park and Play Ground were held for park purposes. Block 81, the location of Central High School, was held for school purposes. The east half of Block 124 and all of Block 125, were set aside for government purposes, now occupied by the Cass Building. Block 140 was held for school purposes, now West Junior and Kalamazoo Street School#. Block 137 was held for park purposes and is now Reutter Park.

The first grant to a church was Lot 6, Block 96, in 1848, to the Methodist Episcopal; the next to Central Presbyterian in 1850 for Lot 7, Block 96. These lots are located on the north side of Ottawa Street between Washington and Capitol. Lots 7 and 8 of Block 63, were granted to the Episcopal Church in 1856, the southeast corner of Seymour and Saginaw streets. Other grants were Lot 11, Block 113, at the southeast corner of Grand and Allegan to the Universalists; Lot 1, Block 126, southwest corner of Washtenaw and Townsend to the Baptists; Lot 12, Block 136 at the southeast corner of Kalamazoo and Capitol to the Free Will Baptists; Lot 10, Block 128 on the east side of Capitol Avenue, between Washtenaw and Kalamazoo to the Congregationalists. Religious interest has been very active in the early development of this settlement with service being held in the open by a circuit rider and in the Page home and old Cedar Street School.

A burial ground was also provided--the selection being Block 248, this would lie at the southeast corner of Larch and Saginaw streets. It was later decided that this would be too low for a burial ground so a plot was purchased outside of town. This purchase could have been the cemetery that was located on the south side of Saginaw and east of the Michigan Central Railroad--now Oak Park.

The lots which were not withheld were placed on the open market. In the beginning, alternate lots, in pairs, were sold and it was found that this created a hardship in the locating and clearing of the property, so the policy was changed and all of those lots on the west side of the river that were not withheld, were placed on the market. ~~Early purchases were~~
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Early purchases were made, The first sale being made June 23, 1847 on Certificate No. 1, for Lot 1, Block 107, located at the southwest corner of Pine Street and Michigan Avenue. This certificate was surrendered for some reason and the lot was resold in 1854. Certificate No. 2, was issued to Philip French from New York and included Lot 6, Block 114, at the northwest corner of Grand Avenue and Washtenaw Street. This lot was assigned to Solomon Lansing with a patent being issued in 1887. Certificate No. 3 was issued to Henry Jipson and William W. Upton of Ingham County and included Lot 12, Block 129, located at the southeast corner of Washington Street and Washtenaw Avenue.

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The lots in Section 16, being classed as primary school land, could be sold on a part payment agreement as provided by the statute regulating the sale of this class of land. Payments were to be made each year with interest and the taxes to be kept paid or the State of Michigan could foreclose on the certificate of purchase and resell the property. The certificates were subject to assignment and on full payment of the purchase price, the State issued a patent. A number of the early sales were made in the vicinity of River and St. Joseph streets. This can be verified in the abstract of sales and the report of the Land Commissioner, in that one of the first streets suggested as being needed, was River Street, from St. Joseph to Washtenaw Street. At one time, the thinking was that an important section of the town would develop along St. Joseph Street and

as a result, all of the lots fronting on this street, were sold early--also on Washington Avenue from St. Joseph Street to Michigan Avenue.

With the sale of lots, homes were built; together with places of business, and thus began the Town of Michigan in 1847. As a matter of convenience in laying out the Town of Michigan, Mr. Seymour's land and that of Mr. Townsend had been included in the survey, the number of the blocks beginning in North Lansing and continuing to the south, including the land of Mr. Townsend, the north half of Section 21.

One of the first stores in the Town of Michigan was on Cedar Street at Main Street where Thomas, Bush & Lee from Howell built on the main north and south road; they also had the first post office.

It was not long before Mr. Seymour built a hotel in North Lansing at the intersection of Franklin and Center streets. The Benton House, another hotel, was started on the northwest corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue late in 1847 and completed in 1848. (E. H. Peck was proprietor).

With the development of the Town it was recognized that bridges were needed. As a result, Mr. Seymour built a sturdy bridge across the Grand River at Franklin Street--a bridge that was to last 20 years. It was a long way around for traffic to the Capitol, especially for the transportation of building material, as this was the only bridge across the river. The people of the Town raised the necessary funds to construct a bridge across the river at Main Street, which lasted until it went out in a flood in 1852. It was replaced by the Township in 1856. The town was taking shape and beginning to look like a town even though it was scattered through the woods.

It was not an easy task to clear land in the early days with the equipment that was available, especially when the trees varied from 2 feet to 4 feet in diameter. The contractors, Samuel P. Mead of the County of Wayne and George W. Peck of the County of Ingham, found this to be true. They had entered into a contract with the Land Commissioner, Mr. Silver, on the 29th of April, 1847, to clear certain streets of the Town of Michigan and to certain specifications. This included clearing a strip $2\frac{1}{2}$ rods wide, pulling the stumps and burning the logs so as not to damage the shade trees. One year was allowed to complete the job at a fee of \$2,000.00.

Further evidence of activity is found by Mr. _____ Potter of Potterville, who had been employed as a member of a survey party on the survey of the State Road from Battle Creek to Lansing. They were approaching the Town of Michigan on their survey of the State Road, along what would now be the railroad along M-78, near Waverly Road, when they heard sounds of wood cutting and went to see who it could be. They found Mr. _____ Cooley chopping wood on his farm on the south side of the river. Mr. Cooley rowed across the river in his boat to meet them and took the party down river to see what the Town was like. On the following day, the surveying party was completing its survey and passed along what is now Main Street and found there, in the process of construction, the Benton House, which was to be one of the leading hotels.

With the construction of the bridges at Franklin and Main streets, naturally settlement developed at these points first and thus the names of Upper Town and Lower Town came into existence. The area along the river on River Street, developed rapidly as there was still considerable traffic on the river. Middle Town developed immediately after, inasmuch as the principal interest of business were anxious to locate near the Capitol.

We must remember also, that Mr. Seymour and Mr. Townsend were not idle in the sale and promotion of their properties that had been platted to the north and south of the State Land. North Lansing or Lower Town developed fast with business and residential buildings. Mr. Seymour's hotel was complete and prominent people made it their headquarters. It was a long way from the hotel to the Capitol and the only means of transportation was by horse and buggy or cutter in the winter. The other and more popular way was to walk. Few people today would think of such a thing. Mr. Seymour in thinking of the convenience of his guests, and undoubtedly as a promotion for access to his property, laid a walk of planks toward the Capitol. This was quite an improvement as the rains left the land wet and muddy. The ladies had difficult times in that the brush had been cut to a few inches of the ground leaving a stubble that was sharp and dangerous. Their flowing skirts and petticoats caught on the stubble much to their dismay. But it would be some time before walks would be provided.

Work on the Capitol was nearing completion and the Legislature would be arriving to convene in their new chambers. There were probably a number of the Legislators who were dismayed at the thought of having to put up with the hardships made necessary by the hurried construction of the new Capitol. It was there to stay however, and they made the best of it. Without a doubt, there were some who wondered how this had come about and whether or not it was too late to change it.

They were not given much opportunity to think about it as the 1848 Session was to be a busy one. The State of Michigan had received 500,000 acres of land from the United States for internal improvement purposes, to be used in the construction of roads, bridges, dams, etc. One of the early acts of the Legislature, to affect this area, was to provide 6,000 acres of this land grant for the improvement of the road from Detroit to Lansing. Other state roads: Michigan City to Mason--Michigan City to Owosso to Saginaw, were provided for. There were also a number of corporations authorized for the construction of plank roads. The Town of Michigan being the center of attraction required all these improvements and more.

Money was authorized for the construction of the bridge across the Grand River at Michigan Avenue, by Act 174, 1843. In the same Act, provisions were made for the improvement of the Capitol grounds and Michigan Avenue. The improvement of the road to Detroit was essential as the mail had to go through. The mail route had been established by Resolution No. 16, February 8, 1848. It provided for a daily run from Detroit to the Town of Michigan. The state was able to make it through in fast time, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a change of horses every 10 miles.

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With the changing time it was recognized that the land/had been reserved for the Capitol site was more than necessary and that part of the 30 acres east of Capitol Avenue and between Ottawa Street and Allegan Street and including Blocks 99, 100, 101, 110, 111, and 112 was released for sale. The State also acquired blocks by warranty deed from Mr. Townsend in fulfillment of a certain bond penal sum of \$10,000. These lots were located south of St. Joseph, Pine and Townsend streets and on Hazel, South and Cedar streets at Junction of the Grand and Cedar rivers. They were to bear the classification of Capitol building lands and the funds derived from their sale would apply on the Capitol building.

Time passed and building continued with business interest centering around the Capitol area and along South Washington Avenue. The Benton House was finished in 1848 and a number of the people who had catered to the hotel in Lower Town now found it more convenient to stay at the Benton House which became a headquarters for the Legislators.

The sale of lots by the State continued and according to Mr. Silvers, \$18,233 was received for the sale of lots in 1847 and in 1848, \$17,778. Total sales for these 2 years being \$36,011 or one-third of the appraised value. The sales began to slow up however, as in 1849, only \$3,203 was received from the sale of lots; in 1850, about \$750; and by 1851, only \$625. Consideration was given to reappraising the remaining lots to that, as the Commissioner stated, "they would not remain dead on their hands".

Contracts were let for the clearing of the blocks held for school and park purposes with the price of \$15.00 per acre. The terms of the contract also required fencing the blocks and granted the privilege to use the property on a year-to-year basis for not more than 5 years. A similar contract was given to Charles T. Allen for clearing and fencing the Capitol square at \$9.00 per acre, except that he was paid \$210.00 for fencing the square and granted the use of said square for one year.

With the clearing of the streets and park areas, it was recognized that the forest which had existed would at some time disappear. As a result, planting of trees were made along the streets and in the park areas--these plantings can be recognized in the great trees that still line our streets --especially around the Capitol square, and particularly in Reutter Park in the planting along the diagonal walks through the block.

Lansing continued to expand. Merchants moved in with their wares. Mr. Seymour's mill was probably the principal industry in Town as there was plenty of timber to cut and lumber to saw. Building continued and therefore there was a need for merchants. Homes were in the building along with the Capitol and hotels, therefore, carpenters were in demand.

With the continued development and the operation of the Benton House, arrangements were made to build a bridge over the Grand River at South Washington Street. Both the State and private interest invested in this undertaking in 1850. With the completion of this bridge, a new way was opened into the Town of Michigan, the road being extended to Mt. Hope

Avenue. This gave an entrance to the City from the south.

The State Journal, originally The Republican, was the newspaper of the Town of Michigan. It was selected by the Legislature in their resolution No. 8, February 2, 1849, to be the official newspaper in which would be published all of the official notices required by law. In their edition of January 3, 1880, appeared extracts of earlier editions of 1854 and 1856. The complete article by S. D. Bingham is of some length. The following portions, however, give a picture of the Town of Michigan at that time:

"The population and business was scattered, and this was essentially a city of magnificent distances. There were only two brick buildings in this part of the city (and I think within the entire limits) the Benton House, now the Everett House, and the store occupied with W. G. Patterson. Where the Lansing House now stands was a wooden building and just south were two log cabins. These were the only dwellings between where the Lansing House now stands and the Benton House except the house of George H. House and one nearly opposite occupied by Stanley Briggs. Main Street from Washington Avenue down to the river was pretty well filled with dwellings, there being a hotel on each side of the river. The ground on which the State House office now stands was considered the outside limits of the town To the west of the capitol there were a few dwellings excepting on Sycamore Street near the residence of Elson Teeter, then known as Teeter Town. . . . Lansing well deserved the name it then received, The hole in the Woods, so far as its connection with the outside world."

William A. Barnard writing from the State Land Office, April 22, 1861, undoubtedly recalled the phrasing used by Mr. Bingham in the original article in that he wrote to Ellen _____ using the same descriptive phrase "The City of magnificent distances", he added, however, "with long streets and houses scattered all over the premises". His further description of the Town is that "Lansing is a town of 4,000 inhabitants surrounded on all sides by woods. It seems if a whirlwind had help(ed) to make the clearing and then had a city dropped down here among the stumps to fill the vacume (vacuum) without trimming off the rough edged."

The State Land Office which had been located at Marshall moved to Lansing in 1849, so this too brought a number of people to this City with their first contact being with the Land Office for the purchase of land. Other interests moved in and established their places of business in Lansing. Thus, our City grew and in 1859 by Act 220, the Michigan State Legislature provided for the Town of Michigan to incorporate as the City of Lansing with its boundaries including all of Sections 9, 16, 21, 10, 15, 22 and the east half of Section 8, the east half of Section 17 and the east half of Section 20, Lansing Township. The Town of Michigan has developed from two Sections in 1847 to seven and a half Sections in 1859 and today the greater part of Lansing Township is included in the City of Lansing and it is without question a CITY OF MAGNIFICENT DISTANCES.