Michigan's First Republican Governor is from Green Oak

Kinsley S. Bingham selected Green Oak Township as his new home in Michigan. He came in 1833, following his marriage to Margaret Warden, newly arrived from Scotland. In Section 11, about a half mile south of the Huron River, 200 acres were purchased. Margaret's brother, Robert, had married Bingham's sister, Caroline, and the two couples jointly purchased 120 acres. (Robert and Caroline also bought 320 acres.) They worked together on the task of developing a home site in the wilderness. This meant clearing, fencing, putting up buildings, planting, harvesting, etc., all accomplished within a few years.

Four days after the birth of their son, Kinsley W., Margaret died. "After a suitable time. . . her sister, Mary, became Kinsley's wife. A son, James W., was born to them in 1840. The brother of Kinsley S., Or. Ira Bingham, arrived in 1841.

Having studied law in Syracuse, N.Y., Kinsley's leadership abilities were put to good use even before Michigan statehood in 1837. Under the Territorial government his neighbors elected him to Justice of the Peace and postmaster positions. He was Livingston County's First Probate Judge. Election to the legislature followed upon statehood. Three of the four terms served were as Speaker of the House. In 1845, the only authentic farmer in the National Congress, his efforts were always in the interest of agriculture. While the merits of a forged plow as opposed to a cast iron plow escape us today, he knew the cast iron plow would hardly last one long row before breaking on the stones found in a Livingston County area and prevented the introduction of the "woods patent cast iron plow". Following his reelection in 1848, he strongly put forth his opposition to slavery.

Until 1854 he'd been a Free Soil Democrat. His Congressional record won him nomination to the governor's office in the newly formed Republican party, the first Republican governor in the country. A second term followed in 1856. Mindful of his agricultural roots he was responsible for the establishment of the first land grant college in the U.S., the Agricultural College in Lansing in 1857 (MSU). The construction of the "Soo" locks, 1855, on the St. Mary's River, was another major accomplishment in his public career. We cannot begin to estimate the benefits to Michigan the locks represent, especially to the U.P. Educational, charitable and correctional institutions came into being during Bingham's administrations. His return to Congress in 1859, enabled him to be very active in Abraham Lincoln's campaign for president.

October 5, 2003, marks the 142nd anniversary of his death at his home in Green Oak Township. He was buried in the family burial site behind his home on Silver Lake Road. After Mary's death, Margaret's son, Kinsley W., moved the remains of his father, mother, half brother James (died in the Civil War), and his Uncle Ira, to the family plot in the Old Village Cemetery. (Compiled by Marleena Bair from the 1989 Portrait & Biographical Album; Bill Pless' Supplement to the Old Village Cemetery; and "Early Landowners and Settlers of Livingston County" by Milton Charboneau. Additions/corrections welcome. 810/229-6402.)
MEMBERSHIP

COUPLES/INDIVIDUAL: Margaret Bowland, #Dian & Susan Smith Edoff (04), Esther Jarvis (04), Dick & Mary Jean Richter (04), Bob & Pauline Schaeffer (04), Dan Scheldt (04), Ann Stratton (05), and Ted Weill (05).

A sincere welcome to Brian & Susan. Sincere thanks to renewing members.

"How do I know if my dues for 2003 are paid?" If there is a "Complimentary Copy" stamp near your address label - they aren't. Inability to pay dues is not one of our virtues. Please contact us if you think an error has been made. Your membership payment supports the administration of the Society, including the printing and mailing of Trail Tales. Volunteer hours are donated - however, the Post Office and office supply store want cash. "Snuf said.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

...Ed Belk, Janice & John Field and June Fklass for helping mail the September newsletter.

...Joanne Snook and Dick Weslar for helping host the recent Open House at Lyon School.

...Dick Weslar for adjusting the boards on the ramp at the school so leaves can blow away, not pile up.

...Larri Lawrence for his donation. Also Margaret Bowland, Esther Jar- visa and Ann Stratton for their donation with their dues.

...Nancy & Jerri Frederick, Mindy Kinsey and Joanne Snook for attending the Society booth at the harvest fest.

...Julie Riedl of South Lyon for the two Pleasantdale Dairy milk bottles.

...Noah Winn for Troop #247, for planning, recruiting helpers and painting the exterior of Lyon School. It's spawling again. This is noted on Noah's application to Eagle Scout rating. Congratulations!

ORDER YOUR 2004 CALENDAR

Early pictures of the area. $6.00.

ARCHIVES

EARLY PICTURES ARE BEING COPIED ON TRANSPARENCIES FOR USE IN PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS. RELATING TO EARLY SETTLEMENT, AGRICULTURE, TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATION, RECREATION, ETC. THESE CAN BE REQUESTED BY YOU OR A TELLER FROM THE WASHBURN (04) BANK. $A SINCERE WELCOME TO BRIAN & SUSAN. SINCERE THANKS TO RENEWING MEMBERS.

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LYON SCHOOL: A bat removal technician is working on that problem. It is preferred they be humanely removed. They are an important part of our environment. Perhaps they'll find a new home in the recently donated and installed bat houses at the site. Sash painting still needs to be done. The paint job done by Noah Winchesi and his crew really looks good. Well done.

FRIENDS OF LYON SCHOOL

Response to the Charter Membership opportunity has been varied satisfying. Most recent charter members are: Margaret Bowland, Carol Miller, Bob & Pauline Schaffer, Ann Stratagelos, Bill & Judy Toalmon, Tony, Nadine & Eric Cloutier.

What is "Friends of Lyon School? What do the Friends do? Why would one want to become a Friend?

They support the maintenance of this functional restoration, purchase of appropriate materials, furniture, play equipment, etc. used during elementary students visits to the school. Memberships help with the costs of utilities (next = $60, avg. electricity = $40, avg.), insurance for damage and individual liability, painting, grass cutting, bat and varmint removal and exclusion, cleaning materials, steel door and weatherproof picnic tables.

Significant personal benefits to Friends include: knowledge your financial support is encouragement to those willing to do the work of maintenance/improvements to the site assuring the efforts of others will be remembered and further developed. Friends will receive special invitations to specific events at the School.

NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED...
People willing to serve on the society board or a committee for the elections at the Annual Meeting next month.

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

POST CARDS with early local scenes, pkg. of 6/$3; NOTE PAPER, pkg $2.50; MUGS $5; TOTE BAGS $15; NEEDLEPOINT KIT $8; all show the Old Town Hall.

PLAT MAPS of Brighton, Conway, Genoa, Green Oak, Homer, Hartland, Howell, Issac and Oceola Townships, 1879 & Brighton area. Howell cities, $1.00. APHGS red, green, blue, with nine local sites woven in, $4.00. TAPESTRY PILLOW depicting the railroad depot and train, $25.; 2004 CALENDAR with pictures of Brighton scenes. To order any of the above, 801/229-6402.

WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Oct 9: 7:30 Plymouth Historical Museum, 155 S. Main, presents 200 years of the camera.


Oct 19, 2-4, Green Oak Township Historical Society will present a program of early history at the Historic Town Hall, 107 S Silver Lake Road. A tour of the old hall will display the work this group has been doing toward its restoration.

Oct 25: 9-5 p.m., A conference on Oral History For Michignaans, Michigan Oral History Association, 680/371-1746 or geiskenm@arq.net

ANOTHER PROJECT?

Donations of early agricultural equipment cannot be accepted at this time.

Area residents, and others, are generous with contributions of items of historic value. Consideration is being given to an appropriately styled structure on the Lyon School site. It seems logical to incorporate early agricultural equipment into the site. It would add to the educational opportunity for visitors.

Is this a project you'd be interested in supporting?

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Advance Craft Home Builders, The Fence Spot, Lawrence, Michigan. The continued support and confidence of these local businesses is much appreciated. Give them your consideration, please. The support of others in the community is most welcome.
MICHIGAN'S FIRST REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR IS FROM GREEN OAK

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