

OCPHS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

Our Society was formed in 1874, and what's kept it alive all these many years is a continual flow of members.

We are asking you to each attract one member by giving the enclosed bookmark and application form to a friend.

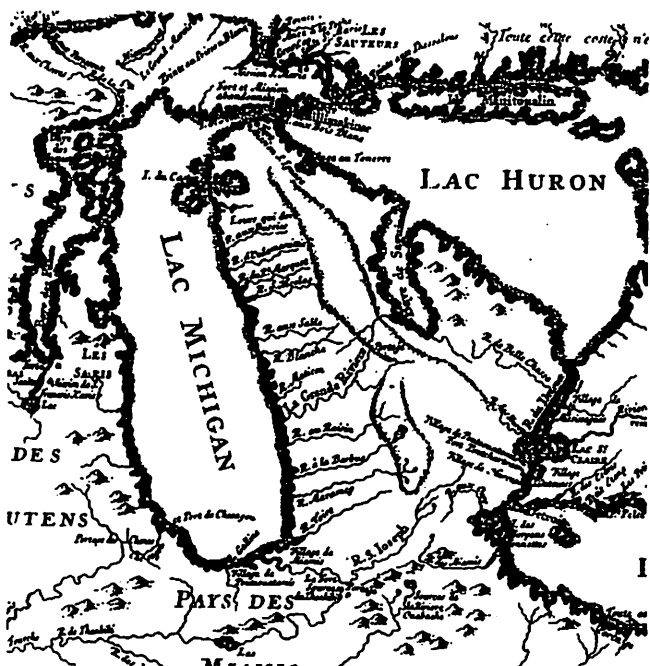


Many thanks from your Membership Committee!

(Feel free to request more bookmarks and application forms.)



**SOCIETY MAPS DISPLAYED
AT OAKLAND COUNTY GALLERIA**



Michigan as depicted by Bellin
in 1755

It is difficult to imagine a country or tribe on this earth who have not at one time in their history used a map or chart. Such articles seem almost bonded to human nature: helping satisfy our curiosity, love of adventure, penchant for detail, need for expansion, etc. They have brought fortune to some and financial ruin to others. Wars have been won or lost due in great part to their accuracy. Deciphering them can often be frustrating, and never try to fold one up while driving. If Confucius was alive today he might add to his famous dictum, "A long journey begins with but a single step ... and a good map!"

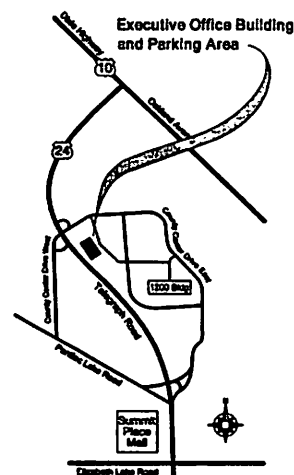
Over the years our Society has been fortunate through the generosity of its members and patrons to obtain a fine collection of maps that trace the history of Michigan and its southeastern corner. Now a sample of that assemblage has gone on display at the Oakland County Galleria on the second level of the Executive Office Building, 1200

North Telegraph Road. It can be seen from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday until December 31, 1996.

The earliest map shown is a color reproduction of a seventeenth-century French specimen that depicts the Great Lakes area with much supposition and imagination. Nicolas Sanson, considered the father of geography in France, gave Michigan's lower peninsula in 1650 the shape of a "paw" rather than a "mitt" as we describe it today. It must be remembered that in those times map-makers were dependent upon adventurers and missionaries for details of distant land and water forms which those explorers had in turn learned of from local natives.

The terrain that would become Oakland County was not mapped in any detail until the arrival of surveyors in 1815-17. A group of inland lakes suggesting the headwaters or source of the Clinton River had been sketched by various cartographers in the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries. A lack of interior reference points, however, made their correct placement quite tenuous.

The display also focuses on the work of Hervey Parke, William A. Burt, and Bela Hubbard --- all of whom played a role in surveying either Oakland County or other parts of Michigan. Quite appropriately a map giving directions to the Galleria and exhibit follows.



A GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

When one thinks of Santa Claus, the image of a roly-poly gentleman with a pack of toys on his back and a twinkle in his eye leaps to mind. But Thomas Nast (1840-1902), famed political cartoonist who is credited with giving us the first popular illustration of Santa, began with a less saintly figure. The artist initially sketched a rather coarse looking dude with a hint of intemperance in his profile doling out gifts to lonely soldiers during a particularly bleak period in the Civil War.

The above cover of Harper's Weekly (Jan. 3, 1863) shows this early representation of St. Nicolas. A companion story on page 6 is headlined "Santa Claus Among Our Soldiers." It begins with the caution, "Children you must not think that Santa Claus comes to you alone." The unidentified writer points out some interesting details in the picture, including Santa's demonstration of a Jeff Davis toy with a rope around its neck, and the conspicuous placement of Harper's Weekly journals in the foreground. Santa is decked out in striped pants and a parka covered with stars, probably borrowed from Uncle Sam. In the background soldiers amuse themselves with games and sporting events. A "Welcome Santa Claus" sign is incorporated into a nearby triumphal arch.

By early 1863 the course of the war was anything but triumphal. A string of Union defeats and Lincoln's recently signed Emancipation Proclamation, which initially received tepid acclaim from all but staunch abolitionists, offered small comfort to the North. To underscore the point, page 16 of this issue carried a stinging rebuke to the President in the form of an unsigned cartoon. In it the figure Columbia asks Lincoln, "Where are my 15,000 sons - murdered at Fredericksburg?" Lincoln's



SANTA CLAUS IN CAMP.—(See Page 6.)

answer, "This reminds me of a little joke." Columbia's reply, "Go tell your joke at Springfield."

Critics believe the fiercely pro-Union Nast did his best work during the Civil War. He is also credited with originating such famous political symbols as the Republican elephant and Democratic donkey. These figures along with his Tammany Tiger, representing a corrupt New York political machine of the time, overshadow his contribution to the world with likenesses of Santa. In happier days Nash softened the Santa image to that of a kindly old elf, thereby warming the hearts of millions at Christmas ever since. A child psychologist recently said, "What our age desperately needs is another Thomas Nast."

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