

YMCA Offers Aquatic Strokes For All The Folks

The YMCA located near Pyramid Mall in the Village of Lansing is offering a series of week-long aquatic stroke clinics for registrants ages 6 to adult. The clinic is a conditioning course instructed by trained YMCA staff. The prerequisite for taking the course is the individual's ability to swim the entire length of the pool.

Sessions begin on March 24th and 31st and April 7th and run every day, Monday through Friday from 6:30-7:30 pm on Mondays and 6:30-8:30 pm for the balance of the week.

The cost for each week-long session is \$25. For additional information, contact the YMCA at 257-0101. To register, stop by the Graham Road West facility.

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WIN A FREE LUNCH* at Roque's Harbor

How well do you know Lansing's history? If you know the answer to the question below, you'll be entered to win a free lunch at Roque's Harbor (\$10 value)

Q: Name the address of the original remaining **GOTHIC REVIVAL** home in Lansing.

SEND your name, address + phone no. with your answer to: **CONTEST**, % Lansing Community News, 209 Wilson Rd., Lansing 4882.

* Contest not open to members or relatives of the 1) Lansing Community News 2) Lansing Hist. Society 3) Ithaca Board of Realtors. One name will be selected from the pool of all correct entries.

Historic Homes in Lansing: The Federal Period

By CJ DelVecchio

From log cabins to spacious contemporaries, Lansing is blessed with a variety of homes that span hundreds of years. Lansing is also blessed to have a history of people who cared enough about the area to record it in detail for future generations. The current town historian follows this noteworthy tradition with obvious love for the subject. Louise Bement has a wealth of knowledge about Lansing's history her enthusiasm for sharing it pays tribute to all historians that have preceded her. She not only collects and maintains these records, she also contributes to them as well. A quick visit to the library and you will find "The Portland Point Memory Book" authored by Mrs. Bement and her 4th grade class. One fact is certain about the people of Lansing, both past and present: they are extremely proud of their beginnings in this area of what was called the "lake country."

As you read through the accounts of the first settlers to the area, you find mention of a smattering of log cabins in Ithaca. Lansing, however, was a booming town; with the powerful resource of Salmon Creek providing a ready location for the first sawmills, gristmills, and tanneries. Soon after the arrival of the first settlers in the 1790's, log cabins were replaced by brick or wood structures in the "Federal" style. It is interesting to note that in other parts of the country, the Georgian style was the predominant style; Lansing, however, has no record of a Georgian style home. The Federal style was then replaced by the extremely popular Greek Revival (c 1825 to 1855), the Gothic Revival (c 1845 to 1860 - only one in existence in Lansing), and the Italianate (c 1850 to 1885). Following these styles came the Queen Anne, or Victorian period (c 1888 to 1905) and the Colonial Revival (c 1890 to 1920). These later styles will be highlighted in subsequent article on historic homes in Lansing; here we focus on the early Federals.

While many of the first homes built in Lansing are no longer in existence, several are still standing, and in great condition. Built in the early 1800's, these "federal" style homes' defining features include a symmetrical layout, a roof line paralleling the street, a 3-bay or 5-bay window arrangement across the front of the home, and the elliptical fan window over the front doorway.



INTERIOR VIEW of a federal-style fan doorway.

These early American homes were built following a pattern that could be ordered from a catalog. These "pattern books" detailed the layout and design of the home. Since building a home was more functional than decorative during this time period,



THE FEDERAL HOUSE - An early Federal-style structure in Ludlowville.

homeowners didn't mind that their houses looked similar on the exterior. They made up the difference on the details and decorative trim. A terrific example of this is the famous "Federal House" in Ludlowville.

The Federal House has had additions to the main building over the years, but still presents the basic layout of the federal style. The entranceway is particularly striking, and although the placement of the door to the right of the facade is more typically Greek Revival, this doorway demonstrates the beautiful handiwork that was done by craftsmen in the early 1800's. The Federal House also has an unique hand-carved fireplace mantle that is rumored to have been made by Brigham Young who was a young apprentice carpenter.

Located at 175 Ludlowville Road, the Federal House is a great statement of the simple yet elegant homes early settlers built upon arriving in the Lake Country. You can learn more about the Federal House by visiting their website at <http://wordpro.com/FedH/FedH.html>.

At the same time Ludlowville was a booming town, Lansingville was increasing it's population. A quick trip up Lansingville Road takes you to the Bensvue Farms (295 Lansingville Road) - another Federal home in great condition. Originally owned by a man named Baker, who was awarded a land grant for his service in the Revolutionary War, this 5-bay Federal is a large home for that time period. When it was originally built, this home had 4 rooms total. Now boasting 8 bedrooms and 3 baths, the Bensvue Farm house has hosted many wed-

dings throughout the years, as well as being the birthplace for the current owner, Chuck Benson.

The name Bensvue Farms appears on another property on the barn near another Federal home at 731 Lansingville Road.



Owned by Clarence Benson (Chuck's father), this home is made of brick and has had two modifications/additions which complement the original layout. Again, a simple house in design, but obviously well-cared for and maintained. This theme of pride in ownership is seen throughout Lansing and is a further testament to the early settler's sense of community and heritage.

Next time we will visit some of the popular Greek Revival homes, as well as divulge the location of the singular Gothic Revival home in Lansing.



Historic homes are one of C. J.'s passions. She works as a licensed salesperson with Audrey Edelman & Associates.



CHUCK & ANDRA BENSON'S federal style Lansingville Road home has some interesting Italianate modifications.

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