How Lansing Became the CAPITAL

1787: Congress passes the Northwest Ordinance, establishing the Northwest Territory. This territory includes the areas we now know as Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

1805: Michigan becomes its own territory with Detroit as its capital.

1837: Michigan achieves statehood after the resolution of the Toledo War.

1847: The decision is made to move the capital from Detroit to Lansing.

Cities all over Michigan throw their hats into the ring to be considered as the new state capital: Ann Arbor, Jackson, Marshall, Grand Rapids.

Why Lansing?

- To promote settlement in the inner parts of the state.
- To move the capital farther away from the US-Canada border and make it easier to defend.
- To make the capital more accessible to the rest of the state.

March 17th, 1847: Michigan’s government moves to its new, temporary Capitol building in Lansing.

1870s: Michigan residents pay a tax of 16.875 cents per year for six years to help raise the $1,200,000 needed to build the permanent Capitol building.

January 1, 1879: The permanent Capitol building is dedicated and becomes the new home of Michigan’s government.