1837 Is 1st Time Flag Flew

The year was 1837; the place, Detroit; the date, Washington's birthday, Feb. 22, a raw, winter's day.

A body of uniformed soldiers stood at shivering attention.

A young man carrying a dark blue cloth strode out before the militia group and handed the cloth to the captain of the guard.

It was in this setting that our Michigan flag was first unfurled.

THE YOUNG MAN was Stevens T. Mason, Michigan's first state governor. He was often called the "boy governor" because of his tender years-24.

The uniformed soldiers were the Brady Guard of Detroit, the first uniformed company of militia in the state. The ceremony would logically take place in Detroit, because it was Michigan's capital city of the time.

This marks the 130th year of the birth of the Michigan flag. It has undergone changes as it evolved into the banner that many of us know today.

The flag is still the symbol of the greatness of Michigan—its dynamic industrial-business-cultural-agricultural heritage.

According to Secretary of State James M. Hare, more persons should know about our flag, and fly the flag.

FROM THE TIME that Gov. Mason presented the first banner, it has undergone changes until, in 1911, the Legislature adopted it as our official state banner.

"The flag was about the same from 1837 until 1865 when the Michigan men were returning from the Civil War," said Hare.

"On Independence Day, 1865, at the cornerstone dedication at the Soldiers' Monument in Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg on the battlefield bathed with blood, the new Michigan colors were raised.

"The State coat of arms was on one side. But on the reverse side, there appeared the coat of arms of the United States, perhaps exemplifying the patriotic fervor which pervaded the time.

"Except that the U.S. coat of arms was afterwards removed, it is the flag we display today," said Hare.

The flag's focal point, the coat of arms of Michigan, antedates statehood. It goes back to and symbolizes the hardy pioneers who inhabited the Michigan territory right after the turn of the 19th century.

"THE COAT OF arms," Hare says, "seems to have been the work of Gen. Lewis Cass, who was governor of the Michigan territory from 1813 to 1831."

The Michigan Great Seal, the center of which is the state coat of arms, apparently was patterned by Cass after the Seal of the Hudson Bay Fur Co. It was presented to the Constitutional Convention of 1835 and was adopted officially that year.

The words, "E Pluribus Unum," appear at the top of the coat of arms. This is the national motto which means, "from many, one." It is symbolic of the formation of one nation from many states.

Below the motto is the majestic American Eagle, the national bird, which stands for superior authority and jurisdiction of the United States. In the eagle's talons are three arrows and an olive branch with 13 olives. The arrow means the nation stands ready to defend itself. The olive branch indicates a desire for peace. The 13 olives are for the original colonies.

THE SHIELD contains the Latin word, "Tuebor," meaning, "I will defend." This refers to Michigan's strategic geographic position on the frontiers of the new nation.

Michigan's great animals are depicted on the coat of arms with the elk on the left and the moose on the right supporting the shield.

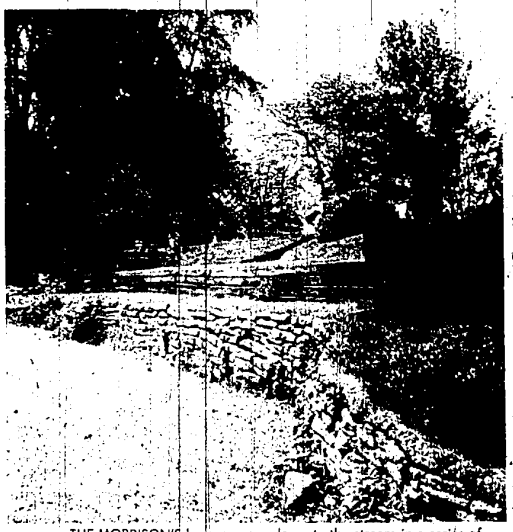
The interior of the shield has a sun rising over a lake. This scene calls attention to a man standing on a peninsula. The figure has his right hand raised, symbolizing peace. In his left hand, he holds a rifle, which means that he also stands ready to defend the state and nation.

Below the shield is the Latin inscription, "Si Queeris Peninsulam, Amoenam Circumspice," ... "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you."

Hare explains that this reference was to the Lower Peninsula, since the Upper Peninsula was added after the seal was adopted in 1837. It was in compensation for the loss of a strip of land on our southern border obtained by Ohio when Congress recognized Michigan as a state.

Serenity Marks Morrison Gardens

THE BROAD LAWN is shaded by large trees for a park-like effect. The flag pole, bird bath and bird feeder serve as a focal point. Many large elms on the lawn have been killed by the Dutch Elm disease.



THE MORRISON'S lawn sweeps down to the stream in a series of terraces. The "dry" stone wall and the wall of railroad ties add architectural interest.

19th Century Song Calls Yankee Farmers To Area

In the 1830s, when the Farmington area was first settled, Michigan was the most popular spot for emigrants in the nation. A favorite song that was probably sung by early Farmingtonites went like this:

"Come all you Yankee farmers, who'd like to change your lot,
Who've spunk enough to travel beyond your native spot,
And leave the village where pa and ma do stay,
Come, follow me and settle in Michi-gan-i-a.

"What country ever growed up so great in little time,
Just popping from the nursery right into like its prime?
When Uncle Sam did wean her, 'twas but the other day,
And now she's quite a lady, this Michi-gan-i-a.

"Then come, ye Yankee farmers, who've mettle hearts like me,
And elbow grease in plenty to bow the forest tree,
Come take a quarter section, and I'll be bound to say,
This country takes the rag off, this Michi-gan-i-a.

FLOATS such as this one sponsored by the Bethel Daughters of the Masonic Temple will be seen in the Festival Parade on Saturday, July 29.

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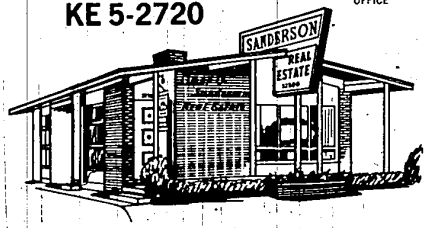

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