

**The original documents are located in Box D35, folder “Dedication of Historical Marker, Former Home of Governor Fred Green, Ionia, MI, September 22, 1973” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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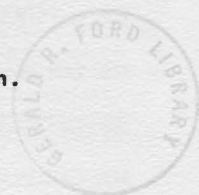
## **PROGRAMME**

### **Dedication and Unveiling Ceremonies for an Official Michigan Historical Commission State Marker in honor of Former Governor FRED GREEN**



**SPONSORED BY**  
**"FRIENDS OF FRED GREEN"**  
The Michigan Republican Party  
The Ionia County Republican Committee  
The Michigan Historical Commission

**Saturday, September 29, 1973 — 11:15 a.m.**  
**320 Union Street**  
**Ionia, Michigan**



## FRIENDS OF FRED GREEN

MR. and MRS. EDDIE ABRAHAM,  
East Lansing

MR. RICHARD AKEY,  
Grand Blanc

MR. and MRS. BURTON ALDRICH,  
Ionia

MR. and MRS. RICHARD ALLEN,  
Ithaca

MR. and MRS. A. LAWRENCE BARLEY,  
Portland

MR. and MRS. GEORGE BEHRENDTS,  
New Buffalo

MRS. MARCIA BUHL,  
Flint

MR. and MRS. RAY M. BOUVIER,  
Bloomington, Indiana

MR. and MRS. BILL CARR,  
Ionia

MR. and MRS. CURTISS CHADWICK,  
Ionia

MR. BYRON CROSSE,  
Kalamazoo

MRS. C. BORDON CHASE,  
Ann Arbor

MR. JIM DEFRANCIS,  
Washington, D.C.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL DIVELY,  
Traverse City

MRS. MILDRED DUNNELL,  
Mt. Clemens

MR. and MRS. LOREN DUNHAM,  
Ionia

MR. ROBERT FITZKE,  
Lansing

MR. PETER FLETCHER,  
Ypsilanti

MR. and MRS. JOHN FLUHARTY,  
Mt. Pleasant

CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD,  
Grand Rapids

MR. ROBERT GORSLINE,  
Lansing

MR. and MRS. JAMES HOLBEL,  
Flint

MISS ALYCE HOWARD,  
Battle Creek

MR. PAUL HOWLAND,  
Birmingham

MR. and MRS. HARRY LARKIN,  
Ionia

MR. LOUIS LEGG,  
Okemos

MR. GEORGE LITINAS,  
Southfield

MR. GORDON LOWELL,  
Lansing

MR. and MRS. NORMAN JAMIESON,  
Howell

MR. and MRS. EMERSON MC CARTY,  
Saranac

MR. HUDSON MEAD,  
Detroit

MR. and MRS. JOHN MEADER,  
Jackson

MR. JAMES MIDDLEAUGH,  
Paw Paw

MR. and MRS. JOHN O'KEEFFE,  
Ionia

MR. and MRS. RICHARD O'NEILL,  
Flushing

REPRESENTATIVE and MRS. STANLEY POWELL,  
Ionia

MRS. MARBA PERROTT,  
Grand Rapids

MR. SEYMOUR POSNER,  
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MRS. JOHN RIECKER,  
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Lansing

MR. and MRS. FRED ROWE,  
Portland

MR. and MRS. CARLETON RUSH,  
Romulus

MISS CYNTHIA SAGE,  
Charlotte

MR. SHELDON SMITH,  
Pontiac

MR. PETER SORUM,  
College Park, Maryland

JUDGE MICHAEL STACEY,  
Detroit

MR. and MRS. JOHN STAHLIN,  
Belding

MR. STEVEN STOCKMEYER,  
McLean, Virginia

MR. and MRS. RONALD STORY,  
Ionia

MR. and MRS. SY THINGSTAD,  
Lansing

MR. and MRS. GORDON VANDER TILL,  
Grand Rapids

SENATOR ROBERT VANDER LAAN,  
Kentwood

REPRESENTATIVE DALE WARNER,  
Lansing

MR. ROBERT JOHN WEBBER, JR.,  
Grand Ledge

MR. EDWARD WYSZYNSKI,  
Roseville

## GOVERNOR GREEN

Fred W. Green was born in Manistee, Michigan, October 20, 1872. A year later he removed with his parents to Cadillac, where he was educated in the schools of that city, graduating from High School in 1890. His college education was received in the State Normal at Ypsilanti, and later in the law school of the University of Michigan. From the State Normal School he received the degree of B.S. in 1893, and a life certificate to teach in Michigan schools. He found a school, but during the summer he went to work for a newspaper in Ypsilanti and liked it so well that he gave up the school and remained with the paper for a time. Later he began the study of law, and graduated from the law department of the University in 1898, in which year he entered the army in the Spanish-American War. He commanded Company G. 31st Michigan Vol. Infantry in Cuba, and was mustered out as first lieutenant and battalion adjutant.

After the war, he was elected City Attorney of Ypsilanti. While practicing law the opportunity was presented for him to enter business life. He became associated with the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company at Ypsilanti, and later purchased stock in this enterprise. In 1904 this institution moved from Ypsilanti to Ionia. Michigan was then as now struggling with the great problem of how to employ her convicts. The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company was urged by Warden Fuller at Ionia to employ his convicts, and a contract was finally made, vastly more advantageous to the State of Michigan and to the convicts themselves than anything which up to that time had been devised.

In 1913 fire made necessary a rebuilding of the factory, the forerunner of the present immense institution. The rebuilding was done on a scale which practically withdrew the Company from the prison. In 1921 he surrendered his contract and urged that he be released from further obligation to the State, but it was not until 1923 that the State was able to provide a suitable substitute and the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company was able to withdraw entirely from the prison. This company has grown to be the largest institution of its kind in the world. Mr. Green was heavily interested in other concerns turning out a similar product. The use of such vast quantities of reed made desirable his own reed plantations and factories. Accordingly he bought land in the Orient, and at Singapore had agents and facilities for gathering for export to America the native rattan that was later made up into reed furniture.

Success in his manufacturing enterprises caused other kinds of business to seek his advice and counsel. He became director of the Lake Odessa State Savings Bank, President of the National Bank of Ionia, Director of the Michigan Trust Company, Grand Rapids, partner in the Upton Banking Company of Lyons, and was interested in the Bank of Muir, and the Ypsilanti State Savings Bank. In the furniture line Mr. Green was manager, director and secretary-treasurer of the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company, vice-president of the National Rattan and Willow Company, New York; secretary-treasurer of the Michigan Seating Company, Jackson, the Western Land and Timber Company, Ionia, and the National Fiber Reed Company, Aurora, Indiana. He was manager and director of the Ionia Free Fair Association; vice-president and director of the Grand Rapids Market Association. In addition, Governor Green was interested in farming, owning and operating farm property in Western Michigan.

The favor in which Governor Green was held by his fellow townsmen of Ionia was evident from his election as mayor of Ionia for thirteen terms. He served as treasurer of the Republican State Central Committee of Michigan for ten years. In 1926 he defeated Alex J. Grosbeck in the primaries, and was elected Governor of Michigan by a plurality of 172,409 votes over William A. Comstock, candidate of the Democratic party. He was inaugurated to office January 1st, 1927.

The first legislature under Governor Green's administration was marked by unusual harmony with the executive. The Governor's veto was freely exercised. A vigorous fight was made against professional lobbying. Evidence of the strong influence of the Governor was the prompt passage of administrative measures, among the most important of which were:

1. A new code of criminal procedure.
2. An improved workmen's compensation law, which raises the maximum compensation to eighteen dollars, with a percentage of 66 2/3 of the average weekly wages.
3. Important crime measures placing "teeth" in the laws, including more stringent regulations for firearms.
4. Limitation of Governor's veto on action of the Administrative Board.
5. The Horton code of school laws.
6. A highway finance program requiring a three-cent gasoline tax.
7. A uniform traffic code.
8. An act giving the Administration authority to enter into a new contract with the Grand Trunk Railway.
9. Important measures designed to further conserve the state's natural resources.

Governor Green was an out-of-doors man. He knew how to play as well as work. Fishing, hunting and out-door sports occupied his free time, and he believed in taking time to keep fit. He loved specially the wilds and the open spaces. He was genuinely interested in conservation of wild life and of the state natural resources. He believed that the best conservation was intelligent use.

Mr. Green was married to Helen A. Kelly at Cadillac, June 18, 1901. Mr. and Mrs. Green made their home in Ionia, but while he was Governor they lived in Lansing. They had one daughter, Helen Nancy Tyrell.



**PROGRAMME**  
**FRED GREEN MARKER DEDICATION**

MUSICAL SELECTIONS:	Ionia High School Jazz Band Mr. Andy McFarland, Director
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF MASTER OF CEREMONIES:	Mr. Larry Barley, Portland Chairman, Ionia County Republican Committee
MASTER OF CEREMONIES:	Mr. William F. McLaughlin, Chairman, Republican State Central Committee
WELCOME:	Honorable Donald Stanton, Mayor of Ionia
INVOCATION:	Mr. Jack M. Findlay, Associate Pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church of Ionia
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:	Miss Terri Meeuwsen, Ionia area Centennial Queen
NATIONAL ANTHEM:	Mr. Sy Thingstad, Lansing
REMARKS:	Mr. Kenneth Spaulding, President Ionia County Historical Society
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:	Mr. William F. McLaughlin
INTRODUCTION OF CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD:	Mrs. Mildred Dunnell, Mt. Clemens Vice Chairman, Republican State Central Committee
REMARKS:	Congressman Gerald R. Ford, Grand Rapids Minority Leader of United States Congress
REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF SENATOR ROBERT VANDER LAAN:	Mr. Michael J. Washo, Lansing Deputy Director, Division of History Department of State
REMARKS:	Senator Robert VanderLaan, Kentwood Senate Majority Leader
OFFICIAL DEDICATION OF STATE HISTORICAL MARKER:	Mr. Hudson Mead, Grosse Pte. President, Michigan Historical Commission
UNVEILING OF MARKER:	Congressman Gerald R. Ford Mr. Peter O'Connor Mr. Rex O'Connor, Jr.
ACCEPTANCE OF MARKER:	Mr. Rex O'Connor

**Arrangements Committee:**

Larry Bailey, Portland  
Alice Durak, Lyons  
Joanne Larkin, Ionia  
Kris Taylor, Lansing  
Marcia Soderberg, Lansing  
Mike Washo, Lansing

**Co-ordinator of Dedication Event:**

Jerry D. Roe, Lansing  
Executive Director, Michigan Republican Party and member of the  
Michigan Historical Commission

**Thanks and acknowledgements to:**

Ionia High School Jazz Band and its Director Andy Mc Farland  
Bill Pryor – Sound System  
Ed Roetman Funeral Home – Chairs  
Bobbie Neubacher, East Lansing – Photographer

**SPECIAL THANKS — — —**

**To the O'Connors for all of their great co-operation and help.**



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REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.  
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AT THE DEDICATION AND UNVEILING  
OF A STATE OF MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MARKER  
AT THE FORMER HOME OF GOVERNOR FRED GREEN

AT 320 UNION STREET  
IONIA, MICHIGAN

11:15 A.M. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1973

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

It is a great honor and privilege to be the guest speaker for the dedication and unveiling of the State of Michigan Historical Marker officially designating this lovely home as the former home of Gov. Fred Green of Ionia.

Before I talk about Fred Green, I would like to note that this house, owned for the past three years by Mr. and Mrs. Rex O'Connor, is a most unusual structure. First of all, it's built like a fortress--all big beams and thick walls. It has 20 rooms and four fireplaces. There's a log cabin in the basement, patterned after the log cabin Gov. Green used as a hideaway up in Munising.

Did you know that the gold chandeliers in the living room were fashioned in France? And that the posts and grill work in the wrought iron railing in the main hallway came from Italy? And that the tile in the vestibule and the bar and the hallway between the living and the dining rooms also came from Italy? Ah, but most important, the walnut hand rail in the main hall was made in Grand Rapids. And the architect for this beautiful home was Harry Mead of Grand Rapids, who also designed two of the schools in Ionia.

The O'Connors have completely restored the house, which makes it a living monument to Fred Green. We naturally think of Fred Green in his role as governor, but it is also important that we remember Fred Green as an Ionian. After all, he lived in Ionia from 1904 to 1936, and he served as mayor of Ionia for 13 terms. Gov. and Mrs. Green made their home here. They had one child, a daughter.

Fred Green was born in Manistee in 1872, grew up in Cadillac, got a bachelor's degree from Ypsilanti State Normal, and received a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1898. It was also in 1898 that Fred Green entered the Army in the Spanish-American War. He commanded Company G of the 31st Michigan Volunteer Infantry in Cuba, and was mustered out as a first lieutenant and battalion adjutant.

(more)

After the war, Fred Green was elected City Attorney of Ypsilanti and entered business while practicing law. He became associated with the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company, which moved in 1904 from Ypsilanti to Ionia. It was that move which made Fred an Ionian. It also led to a contract whereby inmates at the State Prison in Ionia were employed at Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company. That contract was said to be vastly more advantageous to the State of Michigan and to the convicts themselves than any prior arrangement for prison labor ever made.

In 1913 the factory burned and had to be rebuilt. As a consequence, Green practically withdrew the company from the prison contract and in 1923 the company was able to withdraw entirely from the pact with the prison. Meantime, the company has grown to be the largest institution of its kind in the world.

Fred Green was interested in other concerns turning out products similar to reed furniture. He therefore bought land in the Far East and had agents at Singapore who gathered for export to America the native rattan that was later made into reed furniture.

As a highly successful businessman, Fred Green became director of the Lake Odessa State Savings Bank, president of the National Bank of Ionia, director of the Michigan Trust Company, Grand Rapids, and partner in the Upton Banking Company of Lyons, and was interested in the Bank of Muir and the Ypsilanti State Savings Bank. He was also manager and director of the Ionia Free Fair Association and vice-president and director of the Grand Rapids Market Association. He owned and operated farm property in western Michigan.

Active in politics, Fred Green served as treasurer of the Republican State Central Committee for 10 years and in 1926 became the Republican nominee for governor by beating Alex Groesbeck in the primary. He was elected governor by a plurality of 172,409 votes over William Comstock and was inaugurated on Jan. 1, 1927.

Gov. Green's first administration was marked by unusual harmony between the legislature and the executive branch. Under Gov. Green, the legislature adopted a new code of criminal procedure, an improved workmen's compensation act, important anti-crime measures that put teeth into the criminal laws, a new code of school laws, a highway financing program, a uniform traffic code, and significant conservation measures.

(more)

It is appropriate that Gov. Green should have made his home in Ionia because he loved rural living and the out-of-doors. He knew how to play as well as work. He delighted in fishing, hunting and other sports. He especially loved the woods and the open spaces. You might call him one of the first ecologists, because he was genuinely interested in the conservation of wild life and of Michigan's natural resources.

Fred Green built the beautiful home we are commemorating today in 1923 and 1924. It is a fitting monument to his memory, a symbol of the day when all of our waters were clean and the air was fresh and pure--as Fred Green enjoyed them.

In the gracious couple who live in this home today we have people, like Fred Green, who recognize and love natural beauty. And so Michigan is very fortunate in having the Rex O'Connors as the owners of this home which is today dedicated as a part of Michigan history. With this unveiling, we today officially dedicate the State of Michigan historical marker which denotes that the lovely structure before which we stand is the former home of Governor Fred Green.

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*Fifth District Only*

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