



#### MAJOR REPAIR COMPLETED

"Veranda, Piazza or Colonnade is a necessary and delightful appendage to a dwelling house and in fact during a considerable part of the year, frequently becomes the lounging apartment of the family."

Andrew Jackson Downing 184-

The largest single item of repair and restoration on the Gov. Wisner house since its purchase in 1945 has been virtually completed with replacement of supports, flooring and some framing timbers of the front and side colonnades. Total cost of the project will be approximately \$3800.00. Harry Denyes, a member of the Society, acted as consulting architect; Francis Lohf was the contractor.

The square brick piers which had allowed sagging and settling over the years were rebuilt and now rest on a 3' continuous concrete block footing. Steps and facings were replaced, and along with the new floor, were machined by Mr. Lohf to match original dimensions. In some cases substitutions were deemed unavoidable due to availability or cost. Such an instance resulted in the use of fir rather than pine for the porch floors.

Finishing touches on this project are awaiting spring. It will also then be possible for the Grounds Restoration Committee to begin work on the areas near the front and side of the house.

To make the quotation at the beginning of this article assume concrete form as a lesson in history and culture will be a large and expensive challenge, but until the total picture of the life at "Pine Grove" a century ago is completed, the total impression cannot be really correct. At present it does not do justice to this fine country residence in frontier Michigan which showed a quickly transplanted and high degree of culture. It is an undisputable bill of credit to the early settlers and an asset to the community today.



## EDITORIAL

On December 15th my resignation as curator of this Society becomes effective. Because the reasons behind this move are fundamental to the future of the organization you support, this editorial was written. Hopefully, it will enlist your active concern so that this Society may become more than just one more of the many struggling, mediocre efforts. Chances for progress have never been better than now.

Marcia D. Starkey

When an organization fails to grow, it begins to die. We are faced with such a choice. Like many other institutions, the historical society has had to change with the times and find new ways to be effective.

This Society was formed in 1874, a boom-time for private organizations founded to celebrate the coming national centennial or, as in this case, to remember the days of early settlement which were far enough past to acquire nostalgia and seem more glorious than difficult. For years the purpose of the Society was to recall and record these days at a yearly meeting. Membership was restricted to those with pioneer families.

As the world grew, newcomers were admitted, but the theme remained the same. Until quite recently throughout the country this antiquarian view has persisted. It involves our reverence for a thing merely because of its age while begging the question of any educational value, and thinks of its private status as nullifying any public trust with the objects and information in its care.

The Oakland County Historical Society has yet to come the extra step of actually accepting the challenge of its responsibility to educate, to interpret this local history so that it be meaningful to those from elsewhere, and to therefore contribute to the community which makes its existence possible.

## Curator Leaves

The Board of Directors of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society regrets that the services of Marcia D. Starkey as Curator were terminated with her resignation effective December 15, 1968. Prior to leaving she prepared the material for this issue of the Oakland Gazette.

Mrs. Starkey has made a valuable contribution to the development of the Society's program. As its first curator she arranged a number of worthwhile exhibits and, with the help of volunteers, organized and cataloged much of the collection of the Society. She initiated the publication of the Gazette, organized and supervised the exhibit of the Society at the Pontiac Mall during Michigan Week, 1968, and worked with members of the Society in two successful new open house ventures. Visitations by both adult and school groups were increased. As this issue of the Gazette shows, the work of restoration progressed during her period of employment, the most notable accomplishment being the repair and restoration of the porch.

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Members are reminded of several other opportunities to enjoy history throughout the winter.

The Troy City History Museum is open at specific times during each week. It is located at 60 W. Wattles Road in Troy.

The Henry Ford Museum series of Antiques Lectures continues on February 14th with William Keener, Curator of the Ohio Historical Society at Columbus who will speak on "The Separatists at Zoar, Ohio". On March 21st James C. Thomas, Curator of Shakertown at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky will talk about "The Shakers at Pleasant Hill". All programs are at 8:30 p.m. in the Museum Theatre and as you may have guessed, are concerned this year with the American communal societies and their arts and crafts. Admission is \$1.75.

The Detroit Historical Museum maintains a lively schedule of changing exhibits throughout the year, now enhanced by the new Kresge Exhibit Hall.



## FIRST VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS HELD AT "PINE GROVE"

The first of what will hopefully become an annual event, "A Victorian Christmas at Pine Grove", has been termed a success by those involved in its planning and execution. This attempt to interpret the beginnings of our modern Christmas holiday was attended on Sunday, December 8th from 2-7 p.m. by around 600 persons. Visitors were treated to carols by Wisner School students, dulcimer music by Merritt Olsen and his son from Birmingham, hot mulled cider, raspberry shrub and breads and cookies. The refreshments were provided by Mrs. Cameron Clark and her committee.

Highlight of the week is the period decorating throughout the Wisner House which was planned by Mrs. A. E. Ayres and hung by the entire Activities Committee under co-chairmen Mrs. Richard Wright and Mrs. Robert Anderson. The 10' parlor tree, its candle holders and the hand-made beeswax candles used throughout the house were gifts of Mr. & Mrs. William Rathburg of Lake Orion. Toys of the period under the tree were recent gifts of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kelly of Detroit, and were used in the Anderson and Dickson families of Andersonville, Oakland County. The tree itself was decorated by Sally, Susan and Bobby Anderson, Don Deyo and Larry Williams under the direction of Mrs. Anderson.

Group tours were scheduled through December 13th, and the house remained open every night, Monday through Friday, for those not able to come on Sunday.

Last minute totals during the Christmas open week show that approximately 1200 people visited the property and that receipts from the silver donation taken as well as student admissions total \$197.20. Actual expenses for decorations, invitations, etc. will be around \$80.00 while the entire amount of food was donated by members of the Society.

BOBBY ANDERSON, DIANA DAVIS, SALLY AND SUSAN ANDERSON AND LARRY WILLIAMS LEARN THE FINE ART OF STRINGING CRANBERRIES FOR THE WISNER CHRISTMAS TREE.

PHOTO BY DON DEYO



## 1969 COMMITTEES BEING FORMED

While all appointments are not complete, following is a list of committees and committee chairmen to date.

Artifacts, Records and Research, Mrs. Donald E. Adams, Chairman

Educational Services, Mrs. Wendell Green and Mrs. Edward L. Ruslander, Co-Chairman

Finance, John P. Harris, Chairman

Membership, Mrs. Robert C. Anderson, Chairman  
Mrs. Marion Hodges, Benter, Secretary

Membership Activities, Mrs. Richard Wright, Chairman

Planning  
Repairs and Maintenance  
Restoration of Landscaping

If any member of the Society is interested in working on a particular committee, please contact me. We need willing committee members!

Richard Poole, President



## SOCIETY OFFICE CLOSSES FOR WINTER

The Society office at "Pine Grove" will close on December 15th for the winter. Telephone calls may be made to the same number, 338-6732 and will be transferred.

## NEW VISITING HOURS FOR 1969

By action of the Board of Directors at its November meeting, new hours were established for the regular visiting season at "Pine Grove" with the hope that greater service to the community may be rendered.

April 1 - October 31      Groups by Appointment

Michigan Week, July & August      Fri. -Sun. 1-4:30 p.m.

## PROJECTS AHEAD

In 1969 there are a number of projects which will demand attention and for which we hope members will watch when they visit "Pine Grove". Allied with the recently completed porch repair, roof repair to prevent leaking which has reared its disfiguring head, and replacement of the ceiling inside the main colonnade will assume early priority. The original ceiling of narrow beaded construction remains under the front portico but was either replaced or covered with masonite on the side porch. Much of the roof needs thorough repair and accurate replacement rather than substitution of incompatible modern materials. Such restoration will also need to be done on the seven chimneys, while extensive replacement of brick and repointing around the exterior walls is obviously needed.

It is also hoped this year to paint the exterior of both the house and one-room school and perhaps begin the replacement of the double entrances, belfry and 6 windows on the school.

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The Society will also be looking for means to repair both the smokehouse and outhouse as well as laying plans for restoration that is major in scope in the area of the pantry, kitchen, laundry and icehouse.

## SPRING PLANS

If you are one of those to whom winter is partially spent in planning for the coming spring and summer, perhaps this item will be of interest. A number of small additions to the things to see at "Pine Grove" are hoped for as soon as good weather permits. Among these are excavation of the outside, brick-lined cistern which has been filled with rubble for a number of years, and uncovering of locations of the icehouse and greenhouse so that their dimensions and remains may be seen. Historical archaeology is increasingly of value in such restorations, and the entire kitchen area should be carefully investigated for information on structures, utensils and wares used, as well as the odd bits of information which come to light with even the discovery of buttons and pins.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Among recent gifts to the Society are:

Additions to the archive including c. 1900 vehicle company catalogues, gift of Margaret Beach. 1874 Wooten Patent Desk, gift of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Whitlow.

Framed lithograph of Michigan Military Academy at Orchard Lake and c. 1870 marriage certificate, gift of Rex Lamoreaux.

Leeds mug and Alcock mulberry vegetable dish, gift of Mrs. Samuel M. Deyo.

Collection of child's toys, ice skates, spyglass, sled, gift of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kelly.

Majolica cheese dish, gift of Mrs. A. E. Ayres.

Dress form, gift of Arlene Cantrill.

## FALL VISITATION

"Pine Grove" remained open for the first time this year until November 15 for group tours. With co-operative weather 183 students visited the property during October and 276 came during the first part of November, making a total of 2,694 student visitors in 1968, excluding December.