



Oakland "Pioneer Society" Celebrates Centennial

One hundred years ago on January 21, 1874 pioneers of Oakland County held an organizational meeting and formed the Pioneer Society of Oakland County. In 1974 a series of events will be presented celebrating the anniversary.

A steering committee consisting of Mrs. Edwin Adler, chairman, Mrs. Robert Anderson, co-chairman, Mrs. Robert Warrington, Richard Hewitt, Richard Henderschott, LaBar Stewart, Jr. and Percy Burnett is making initial plans. Members of the Society will receive more detailed information later and be asked to assist in making this a year to remember.

Beginning with a spring concert honoring volunteers and concluding with a fall concert for public officials, the major events will center around the annual dinner meeting to be held at the Kingsley on May 29, the annual ice cream social on July 28, and the Victorian Christmas open house in December.



Mrs. Billy Ann Maley [left] and Mrs. Sandra Clifton sews a fine seam at the Victorian Open House.

planned. Materials needed are various weights of floss and wool threads, needles, scissors and thimble. Practice cloth will be given out at the first class. The session is limited to 20 enrollees.

Quilting classes will be held in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:30 on Wednesdays starting March 27. Mrs. Maley will also teach this class which is limited to 12. Materials required at the first class are quilting needles, thread, scissors—and don't forget a thimble!

The charge for each class is \$25.00. Registration fee is \$7.50. This covers the first, second and last lessons. \$2.50 will be collected for each of the remaining classes starting at the second session. There will be no refunds.

A series of three Craft Classes is scheduled to start on Saturday, April 27. There will be both morning and afternoon sessions, 9:30 to noon and 1:00 to 3:30.

Registration to all Craft Classes is by check or money order. Mail to Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, 405 Oakland Avenue, Pontiac, Mich. 48058. Bring notebooks to all classes.

Saturday, April 27
Herbs—How to Grow Them—
How To Use Them
Teachers: Mr. Cecil Dumbrique
Mrs. Mary Vogt
Assisted by Men's Garden Club,
Oakland

Saturday, May 4
"The Making of Apple Dolls"
Teacher: Mrs. Diane Gresock
Materials needed: 3 apples, sharp paring
knife, wooden meat skewers

Saturday, May 18
"The Making of Corn Husk Dolls"
Teacher: Mrs. Barb Scantlin
Materials needed: Scissors, fine wire,
Elmer's glue

Both doll classes will have kits for finishing the dolls priced at 50c. The charge for the series of these three classes is \$7.00. If unable to attend one of the series, send a friend. There are no refunds. Specify morning or afternoon classes.

Spring Craft Classes Planned for Pine Grove

Wednesday, March 27, is the opening day for the second annual spring Craft Classes held at Pine Grove. This date starts a ten week series of stitchery and quilting.

The stitchery classes will have morning sessions from 9:30 to noon. Mrs. Billy Ann Maley will teach crewel and embroidery, and a special class project has been

Planning Committee

Members Announced

The Board of Directors at its February meeting directed the President to appoint a planning committee to consider both short and long range plans for development of the program and properties of the Society.

The committee was directed to explore programs sponsored by the Society, classes of membership and dues, ways and means activities, the maintenance and restoration of the properties of the Society and proposals for further development. The findings and recommendations of the committee are to be reported to the Board for consideration and action.

Chairman will be Richard C. Hewitt, the Society's Resident Agent. Other members include Mrs. Edwin Adler, Mrs. Gordon Bryant, Percy G. Burnett, Faye Donelson, Cecil Dumbrigue, Richard Hendershott, Mrs. Charles F. Roush, LaBar Stewart, Jr., Mrs. Ralph L. Sievwright, James Renfrew and ex officio members Mrs. Donald E. Adams, president, Mrs. Richard Balmer, treasurer, and Mrs. Peter Lektzian, Educational Coordinator.

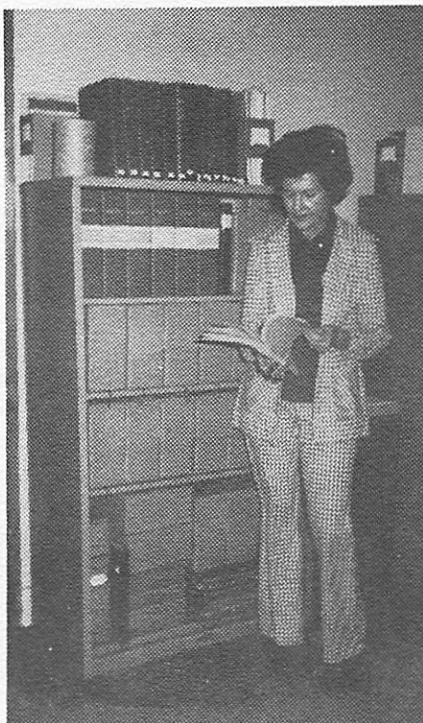
The committee welcomes suggestions either verbally or by mail.

Historical Society of Michigan Celebrates 100th Annual Meeting

This year the Historical Society of Michigan will celebrate its 100th annual meeting. Originally founded in 1828, the state society was reorganized in 1874. This year the annual meeting will be held in Ann Arbor on October 18 and 19.

Oakland County members of the board of trustees of the state society include Maurice F. Cole, Charles J. Snell, Philip Mason, Robert Boelio and Mrs. Donald E. Adams. Mrs. Adams is preparing a brief history of the state society to be published in conjunction with its annual meeting.

Receipt of May Rockwell Howlett Collection



Virginia Clohset arranges Howlett Collection.

Bicentennial Projects

Aid Local Society

As the bicentennial year—1976—draws near, many groups and individuals are seeking ways to celebrate. Several have offered to help the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society with special products.

General Richardson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has adopted as a part of its bicentennial contribution a program of cataloging the Society library.

Rho Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority is repairing text books from the one room school at Pine Grove. Senior Girl Scouts, including one bilingual group, are becoming trained docents and will assist as guides. Other groups are considering projects such as restoration of the belfry on the school, research on restoration of certain rooms in the Wisner house, restoration of the original plantings, and research in special areas.

The Society, as a non-profit educational corporation dependent largely on volunteer help, welcomes assistance from individuals and groups alike.

Augments Library

The papers of May Rockwell Howlett, former Historian of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, were recently received through Lucius Howlett, executor of her estate. Included in the collection are her records collected over the years as a genealogist as well as those as historian of the Society.

Supportive volumes, pamphlets and miscellaneous printed and manuscript items such as Bible records, indices to histories and atlases of Oakland County, and correspondence are included.

Virginia Clohset, a member of the Board of the Society and chairman of the committee on manuscript materials, is arranging the collection. Mrs. Clohset received her training in the archival field at Wayne State University.

Previously some manuscript materials gathered by Lillian Drake Avery, who preceded Mrs. Howlett as Historian, were received. These, together with numerous scrapbooks compiled and collected by officers of the Society, form an instructive source for those interested in the history of Oakland County.

Recently bound volumes of typescripts prepared jointly for the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society by General Richardson Chapter of the Daughters were returned to the Society's collection. They had been on indefinite loan to the Pontiac City Library. Faye Donelson, Society library chairman, and her committee have been cataloging these and other bound volumes in the Society's library.

Funds presented as memorials to our members have been used to equip the library. Recently three new cases have been added, two in memory of Mrs. John K. Irwin and one in memory of Jayno W. and Blanche W. Adams and Alfred and Lena Gale. These cases will house both bound volumes and boxes of manuscripts.

Penny for Your Thoughts

Interest in history is growing—and so is our Society. If you have a friend or relative you think might be interested in joining, send in their name and address on the enclosed card.

GRACIOUS LIVING WAS THE RULE IN PONTIAC

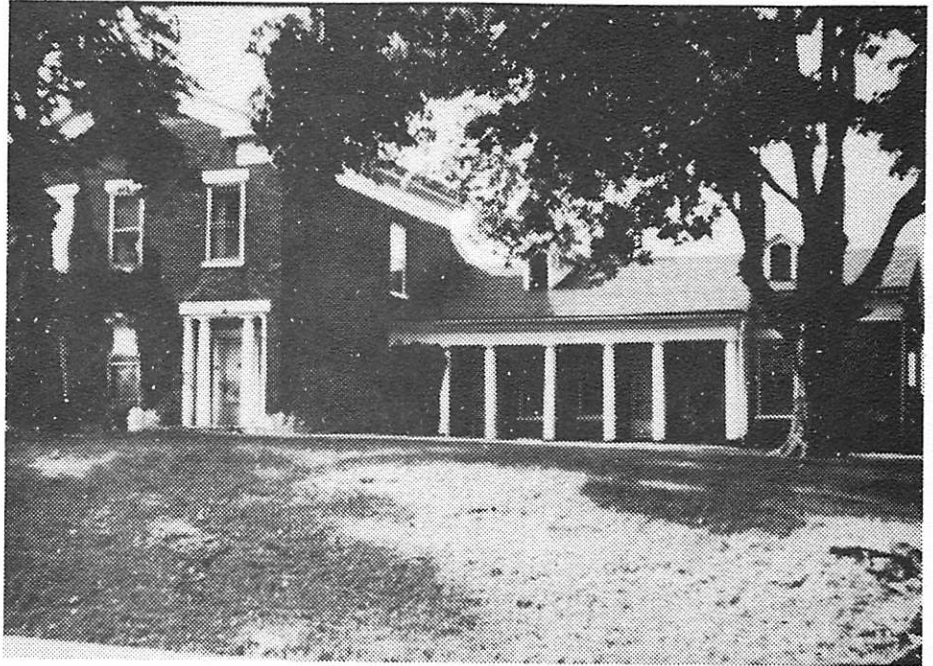
A Survey of Representative 19th Century Homes, Pontiac, Michigan

by Gretchen Adler

A cursory glance at Pontiac shows a city on the wane. As with many urban areas throughout the country, one sees decay, abandonment and neglect. Much of what once made this city a desirable place in which to live has been destroyed in the name of progress. A once picturesque river was allowed to become an open sewer and eventually a covered one. A business district that once thrived and drew people from all over the county has been allowed to decline. Residential areas boasted beautiful and unusually large homes for a city of this size. It was a city that prompted **The International**, a magazine published in Detroit, to name Pontiac its "most attractive and accessible suburb" and describe it as "one of the most beautiful and thriving of our inland cities."

A glance at Pontiac however is not enough; it does not do it justice, for beneath the surface there still lies a city with the vestiges of its beautiful past. By scraping off the neglect and neon one can find several late 19th and early 20th century buildings in the business district,—store fronts that show signs of their former beauty and add character to steel and concrete. One can still find churches that look like churches with their spires that add grace and beauty to a city. But it is the residential areas of Pontiac that still offer us a picture of our past. It is these areas that retain the charm and beauty of a small city on the brink of the 20th Century. And it is in this area that the most progress can be made in preserving these qualities, for well maintained neighborhoods can become a city's greatest asset. Most of the structures appear sound and substantial and certainly offer more in the way of floor space and individual character than the tract houses of suburbia.

The development of domestic architecture in Pontiac coincides with the trends being set in Detroit. Shortly before and after the Civil War, Greek Revival or Classical Revival was popular and Pontiac has several examples from this period. The Moses Wisner House and Christian Science Church, formerly the home of Edward T. Smith are beautiful reminders



SLY (?) - MESSER HOUSE

PRESENT OWNER: Charles Messer

DATE OF BUILDING: c. 1856

ARCHITECT: unknown

REMARKS ON STYLE: A Greek Revival building with one flanking wing. Classical ornamentation in the pediment and entry. Constructed of brick the wing has a colonnaded porch.

SOURCES FOR ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BUILDING:

Pictured as property for sale in realtor's catalog (Oakland Homes, Lizzie Bell Sawyer, Editor, (Post Publishing Press,

Pontiac, Michigan), October, 1899, p. 27).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Portrait and Biographical Album of Oakland County, Michigan [1891] refers to the parents of Melvin D. Sly, on page 733, as John B. and Almira D. Sly as farmers in Pontiac. The Abstract at Lawyers Title notes the Sly Family as owners from about 1850 to 1900 although the page is considerably damaged and the wording unclear.

Atlas of Oakland County, Michigan, 1872, shows the owner as H. Howard.

of this period. Almost immediately the Italianate Villa followed the Classical Revival, and the Crofoot House is a perfect and quite sophisticated example. The next type or style of architecture is called Victorian Potpourri by Hawkins Ferry, author of **The Buildings of Detroit**, and it is just that. A mixture of ornamentations and building materials gave the houses, if not beauty, at least freedom of expression. The walls seem to erupt at any and all angles, windows are placed where they are needed and not where they balance or provide symmetry, and the ubiquitous mansard elevates the low pitched roofs of the Italian Villas.

The Stick and Shingle style is probably the most prevalent style on Norton Avenue and Franklin Blvd. It was a style readily available and affordable by the ever increasing middle class. In the early 20th Century the trend toward period homes of proven attraction was dominant. People rejected the progressive designs of the new century and looked to the past. Ottawa Drive in Pontiac reflects this trend in Tudor and Georgian houses.

Following are examples of some of the attractive homes which still remain.



COMPILER: Gretchen Adler

WILLARD MORSE McCONNELL HOUSE

PRESENT OWNER: American Legion Cook-Nelson Post No. 20

DATE OF BUILDING: unknown

ARCHITECT: unknown

REMARKS ON STYLE: Italianate Villa with classical orders flattened against the facade. Embellished caps over windows, bay window over an arched entry way.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Willard Morse McConnell, born New York state 1813 died April 13, 1885. He came to Pontiac in 1836 and opened a dry goods store. He "was connected with the Eastern Michigan Asylum for the Insane from its earliest incipency, first as one of the Committee on Location than as resident Building Commission, and lastly as Trustee." Mr. McConnell was also a Trustee of the public schools, founder and president of the Second National Bank of Pontiac and appointed by President Lincoln as a commissioner for the Union Pacific Railroad and Telegraph Co. of Michigan. He married Cleantha Parke, Daughter of Capt. Hervey Parke, an early Michigan surveyor.



BENJAMIN S. TREGENT HOUSE

58 Norton, Pontiac

PRESENT OWNER: Joseph LaSalle

DATE OF BUILDING: 1892

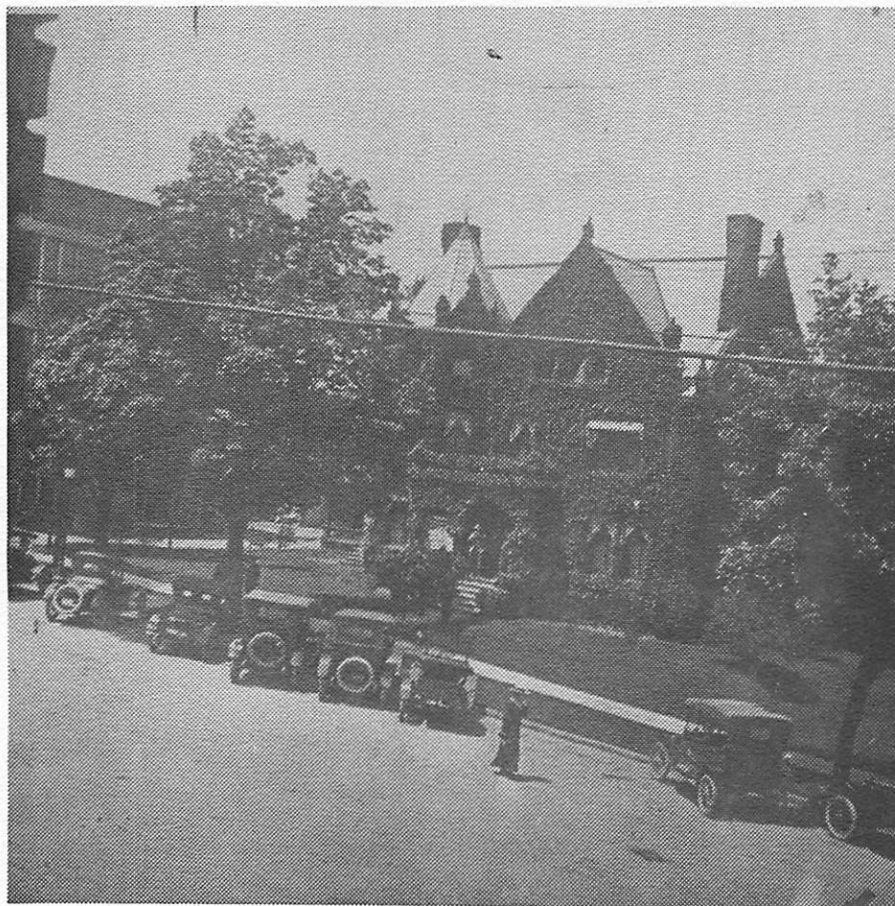
ARCHITECT: unknown

REMARKS ON STYLE: A shingle and stick type of house, the notable characteristic being the wide sweeping veranda which encircles 3 sides of the house.

SOURCES FOR ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BUILDING: (Oakland County Homes, Lizzie Bell Sawyer, Editor, (Post Publishing Press, Pontiac, Michigan), October, 1899, p. 30.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Benjamin S. Tregent came to Pontiac with his family as a small boy in 1855. He became a highly respected businessman.



GALBRAITH HOUSE

PRESENT OWNER: Wyman Furniture Company

DATE OF BUILDING: unknown

REMARKS ON STYLE: A three story brick building probably built in the 1890's during the French Renaissance Revival period. There is a variety of window treatments and the base of the building looks Romanesque with its jutting stone work and arched ground level windows and entry way. The interior has rooms of varied shapes and sizes and a magnificent staircase.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Building located on lots 37 & 38 of the original plat for the Village of Pontiac. The property has had various owners including Schuyler Hodges, builder and owner of the Hodges House in Pontiac.

Dr. Franklin B. Galbraith was one of Pontiac's leading citizens. Born in Sanilac County, Michigan in 1840 he studied medicine at the University of Michigan and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. After service in the Civil War, Dr. Galbraith set up practice in Pontiac. His many accomplishments include being elected Mayor of Pontiac and serving as State Senator. Dr. Galbraith died February 21, 1903.

Docent Course Offered

Starting in mid-March, Monday mornings at Pine Grove will be taken up with a course for docents. All volunteers, members and friends are invited.

What is a docent? Taken from the Latin word meaning 'to teach', here at Wisner House it will mean a training course designed to give added dimension to the scope of volunteer work.

Volunteers and members have often expressed a desire to learn more of the Society's history, more about the background of the artifacts at Wisner House or more about county history or Governor Wisner himself.

A docent course is being offered to those who have spent hours serving as guides—library workers—hosts at our socials—silver polishers or envelope addressers—any or all of these things—and have done so out of a deep interest in the Society and its purpose.

It is being offered to those who, as yet, have never done any of these things but think that possibly they might enjoy doing one or several of them. And it is being offered because this is a growing time for us—and nothing can make our personal interest grow like new ideas.

You are urged to attend this special course being offered at Pine Grove, 405 Oakland Avenue, Pontiac, Mich. Mondays starting March 18 for 5 sessions between the hours of 10:30 to 12:30.



Iama Hook, one of our active Guides.

TIME: 10:30 to 12:30
Always on Mondays

March 25—Session I

- A. Introduction to cope of Volunteer Activities
Connie Lektzian, Ed. Coordinator
- B. History of the Society
Betty Adams, President OCPHS

April 1—Session II

- A. Wisner Family History
Ruth Priestley, Volunteer Researcher
- B. The Practical Tour Guide—Volunteer Techniques
Connie Lektzian, Ed. Coordinator

April 8—Session III

- A. Indian Artifacts at Pine Grove
Charles Martinez, Past President, Clinton Valley Archaeological Society

- B. Progress at Pine Grove — slides

April 22—Session IV

- A. In Case of Fire
Demonstration of our Fire Extinguishers
Courtesy Beach Fire equipment

April 29—Session V

- A. Books and our Library
Faye Donelson, Volunteer Librarian
- B. Pictures—Daguerretypes & Ambrotypes
Tom Sutton, Audio visual teacher, Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge

Be sure and stay for the coffee sociable following each session.

MAIL TO: PINE GROVE, 405 OAKLAND AVENUE, PONTIAC, MICHIGAN 48058

DOCENT COURSE

I AM INTERESTED IN BEING A VOLUNTEER OR GUIDE

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

Florence Clark Wallace

A Governor's Granddaughter

Florence Clark Wallace, granddaughter of Governor Moses Wisner, died February 6, 1974, shortly after her 90th birthday.

Born in Pontiac, January 8, 1884, Mrs. Wallace was the daughter of the late Alpheus Clark and Jessie Wisner Clark.

Pine Grove, built by Gov Moses Wisner, remained in the family until its purchase from Mrs. Wallace in 1945. Since that time, the property has served as headquarters for the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

She leaves one son, David Clark Wallace and three grandchildren, David, Sandra and Robert of Union Lake.

Local History Conference Scheduled for April 5 and 6

The annual Local History Conference for historical societies in the Metropolitan area has been scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6, 1974 at the McGregor Memorial Center, Wayne State University Campus. Interesting speakers are presented and exhibits by historical organizations are on view. Anyone interested in attending may obtain additional information by calling Pine Grove during regular office hours Mondays through Fridays.

Local History Writing Guide Now Available

The state's first major publication for the Bicentennial, **A Guide for the Writing of Local History**, is now available for distribution. A 64 page booklet, it was sponsored by the Michigan American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and edited by the Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State. Its author, John Cumming, is the Director of the Clarke Historical Library of Central Michigan University.

The guide, which should be most helpful for local researchers in locating sources and in preparing and publishing manuscripts on community history, may be obtained by writing the Michigan History Division, Lansing 48918, or through the Michigan American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, Suite 7, 6425 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing 48913.



Florence Wallace seated in the parlor at Pine Grove.

Nineteenth Century Homes Featured in Supplement

Appearing as a supplement to the March 1974 Gazette is a report prepared by Gretchen Adler for a course in American Art and Architecture at Oakland University. She plans to continue her study of Pontiac buildings as a personal bicentennial project. She would appreciate information on the following or any other homes or buildings in Pontiac of interest historically or architecturally. (Phone OR 3-7216).

SURVEY BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Biographical Record of Oakland County Michigan**, Biographical Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1903.
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