

# OAKLAND GAZETTE.

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405 OAKLAND AVENUE, PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

February, 1977-

## Pine Grove's Spring Tour Season Opens April 1, 1977

Friday April 1 will start the spring tour season at Pine Grove.

Before that date, the summer kitchen, root cellar and schoolhouse must be re-opened, cleaned and put in order.

In the flurry of readiness, windows must be washed, silver polished, furniture arranged and exhibits set up. Hopefully, the weather will be warmer and there won't be any young visitors trudging through the snow.

Our carriage house reconstruction is coming along well but may not be ready for spring tours.

Our tours do many things for the visitor. A tour might be a child's first look into county history, or an awakening to how difficult were the lives of the early settlers.

For many senior citizens, a trip through Pine Grove brings back memories of their own childhood or of stories heard as children.

In order to up date our guide list here at Pine Grove, please fill out the form at the bottom of this page. This is for new as well as experienced guides.

For those who have never taken a group through Pine Grove, please check "Training".

Our need for guides is growing. If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our Guide Committee, please have them come in to see us. They will be given printed material to study, take two actual tours with experienced guides, and see a slide presentation before taking a tour on their own.



AT THE VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE guide Kristin Robb in the summer kitchen.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TRAINING \_\_\_\_\_

DAYS AVAILABLE FOR GUIDING \_\_\_\_\_

I WILL BE AVAILABLE THE FOLLOWING TOUR SEASONS:

SPRING (APRIL - JUNE) \_\_\_\_\_ SUMMER (JULY - AUGUST) \_\_\_\_\_ FALL (SEPT - OCT) \_\_\_\_\_

GUIDES ARE ASKED TO ARRIVE ONE HALF HOUR BEFORE TOURS BEGIN. ALLOW A TOTAL OF TWO HOURS FOR EACH TOUR.

# A Backward Glance

by

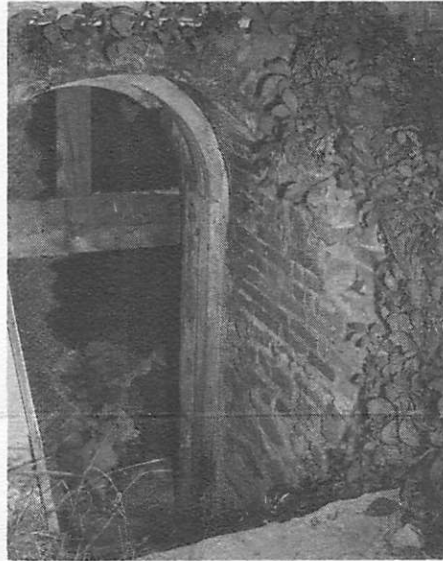
Elizabeth S. Adams

A little over thirty years ago - in February, 1945, to be more exact - the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society authorized formation of a committee to take steps to obtain the Governor Moses Wisner home and restore and preserve it. As an outgrowth, the Oakland County Pioneer and Veterans Historical Foundation was formed and funds were raised to cover the purchase of the house. It was planned to raise restoration funds also and to set up an endowment for maintenance. Funds for purchases were obtained, but solicitation of restoration and endowment funds was deferred due to economic conditions following World War II.

So it happened that the Governor Moses Wisner home was purchased from his granddaughter, Florence Clark Wallace, and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society moved into new headquarters. Much needed to be done: the chimneys were in need of repair, the roof leaked causing plaster damage throughout the house, the floors needed sanding, the furnace didn't work, additional furnishings were required - it looked like an almost impossible job.

Although title was held in the Foundation, there was considerable overlapping of membership on the board of the Foundation and the board of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Both groups set out to get the house in readiness for visitors. How well I remember volunteers, some of whom hired their own housework done, setting out with a will to scrub and polish. One time the principal of Wisner School was seen coming down Oakland Avenue pushing a mop and pail which she had borrowed from the school for our work bee. I wish I had more than the mental picture of that event!

And how well I remember the difficulty in raising sufficient funds to plaster the ceilings, redo the wiring, paint and paper the walls and sand the floors. Cooperation was sought - and obtained - from clubs and individuals. The Civitan Club made cash contributions, the Pontiac Women's Club undertook restoration of the dining room and the Daughters of the American Revolution made regular contributions which were used initially to decorate the sitting room. Later Zonta pledged three annual contributions, the Pontiac Oakland Town Hall and the Pontiac Business and Professional Women's Club undertook specific projects and the Lula Wilson Foundation helped with matching funds whenever some new project was undertaken. Garden clubs, the bottle club and other groups gave time, artifacts, and money.



**A BACKWARD GLANCE** Root Cellar Restoration 1963-65, left to right Arnold Sherman, Joe Filka & Elizabeth S. Adams.

Over the years Oakland County officials recognized the contributions made by the Society and supported it in several ways. In the old days local governments were authorized to contribute up to \$300.00 to local historical societies but as time went by the limitation on the amount was eliminated. For many years Oakland County housed the collection of manuscripts and books and artifacts belonging to the Society, but pressure for space for governmental offices caused a shifting on the society's assigned area from place to place in the Court House and finally to the annex at 1 Lafayette St. In the process artifacts and documents disappeared and it became obvious that a more permanent headquarters was needed. The County continued its support through an outright annual contribution, and this support, together with the annual membership dues, has made possible a small annual income on which the Society relies for maintenance of its program.

Little by little restoration funds were acquired and put to use, and now an endowment fund has been set up. The original contribution for the endowment fund came from Blanche Avery, long time Pontiac teacher and active member of our Society, who left part of the residue of her estate to the Society. Since that time additional bequests, memorial gifts and donations have been added and it is hoped that this will be augmented with additional contributions as time goes on.

In its early days the Foundation had a membership of about one hundred and fifty and the Society had a membership which almost duplicated it. Perhaps two-thirds of the board of the Foundation also served on the board of the

Society and the Society made an annual contribution of most of its income to the Foundation. In the end it seemed logical that the two should merge and pool their resources. This was done and the name Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society was continued as the name of the merged organizations. Today the Society numbers about 650 with members from all parts of the county. In addition, thousands of people annually visit Wisner House on tours and participate in such activities as the Ice Cream Social and the Victorian Christmas Open House.

Last year every time I drove into the yard at Wisner house I marveled at the progress made. Newly planted pine trees were growing where the old grove had been. Flower beds and herb gardens added a homey touch long missing. The house itself looked fresh and well kept. The root cellar, which had been restored by apprentice bricklayers and the bricklayers, carpenters and laborers unions, was now a popular exhibit; the restored privy and summer kitchen were now open to visitors; and the Drayton Plains one room school on the premises provided a place for groups to convene for orientation before touring the house and other buildings. And out in back a carriage house would be built there as a bicentennial project. Best of all, the State of Michigan, the County of Oakland, the City of Pontiac, the schools and innumerable individuals and organizations were all having a part. It gave me a thrill to see this one hundred thirty year old home of a former Governor, which had been held for a century in the family with great sacrifice, now restored and open to the public.





## The Bicentennial Has Passed Into History

Prior to 1976, a number of people came into the library here at Pine Grove. They were researching information on the nation's Centennial, presumably to write articles contrasting that event with the Bicentennial.

There just wasn't much to show these researchers. It would seem that no one in this area had done a great deal of celebrating. A picnic planned by the Pioneer Society was rained out, and while everyone felt badly, nothing more was done.

In 1876, the greatest hurrah came out of Philadelphia. There is little evidence that the Centennial got the all out participation by cities and villages, the party planning and costume making, the balls and festivals that went on during our Bicentennial year.

When our Tricentennial approaches, and reporters and teachers come around wanting to see archival material on the Bicentennial, the staff at the Pine Grove library will be ready for them.

The Oakland County Bicentennial Committee closed its doors at the end of 1976 and all of its files came to our Historical Society.

Every news clipping, handbill, and parade program of how the county celebrated its 200th birthday is here. There are pictures, books, film, community histories and scrapbooks.

Our thanks go to Benjamin Franklin Thomas IV, County Bicentennial Corridorator and his hard working committee. It was through their efforts that OCPHS, was made the repository of these papers.

At some future time, 1976 will be only dimly remembered. When the years roll by and a Tricentennial Committee comes browsing through all these records, they will plainly see "Those old timers had a lot of fun during the Bicentennial".

## Looking Forward

In our clothing collection, here at Pine Grove, it is plain to see that we have ample supplies of such fripperies as petticoats and camisoles, wire hoops and corset covers.

We do however, lack some things for future history.

No one has donated a mini-skirt, for instance, or even a mini-mini.

For the amazement and amusement of viewers of Pine Grove's fashion show of the year 2000, we could carefully pack away a bikini — if we had one.

And, apparently, no one has wanted to part with a pair of blue jeans, plain or embroidered, or high boots or platform sandals.

Why are these things important in the history of clothing? Well, they all shook up the fashion scene in one way or another. They were style innovations, as the hoops and bustles were in their time. And they will be history, too.



A BACKWARD GLANCE  
the summer kitchen was  
restored in 1971-1972

## Lineage & Letters

Acquiring information about the county's families and events, gathering biographies, letters and diaries has been an activity of the Society's since its first meeting.

Later, former presidents James Lynch and Lillian Drake Avery worked hard sending letters around the county, asking for lineage reports and data on families. At that time, such records had to be stored by individuals, or in the Courthouse.

Pine Grove library was gifted with additional file cabinets this past year. Mrs. Clarence (Virginia) Clohset, the Manuscript Chairman, has been inventorying all material donated to the Society since its inception in 1874.

Not only is she expanding the files but is working to establish guidelines to determine collection policy for manuscript material.

An interesting observation: from 1874 until Pine Grove was purchased in 1945, a large part of donations to the Society was in the form of papers.

With the acquisition of a headquarters, the emphasis shifted. With the exception of several important collections of family papers and research material, gifts became mainly third dimensional.

Have we missed acquiring some of our grass roots history in the past 30 years? People are moving away from recording events in the realm of personal knowledge.

There seems to be a common notion that history is what happens to someone else. Not so.

From earlier times, we have accounts from teachers of one-room schools, letters of politicians and diaries of young farmers.

Where are the experiences of today's teachers, embroiled in a bad job market, consolidation and busing? How about a narration from a politician of today who struggled against the system and won or lost? Or a journal from a businessman fighting in a sea of red tape and taxes?

This is the stuff of tomorrow's history. These things will have a place in Pine Grove's files - if someone gives them to us.



## — Charity Bazaar —

# Christmas Comes Again

The Meadow Brook Village Mall will hold their second annual charity bazaar on Thursday - Sunday, April 28 - May 1, 1977. The theme is to be "Christmas comes but twice a year to MeadowBrook Village Mall".

Along with other organizations of a non-profit nature, Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society is going to participate in this exciting event.

It will not only be a fund raising project for our Society, but will gain us a great deal of publicity in a totally different area.

Mrs. Allen (Ruth) Priestley, chairman of this project, is requesting donations of:

- Christmas type baked goods & candy
  - knit and crocheted items
    - Dolls —
      - wooden
      - apple
      - cornhusk
      - china head
- Stuffed animals
  - Herb and calico wreaths
    - Quilted pillows & purses
      - Hand made tree ornaments
      - Sachet packets

There will also be suitable history books & pictures for sale from our Pot Pourri Shoppe.

There should be no modern touches on the items such as sequins or plastic but toys may be stuffed with shredded foam or nylons.

A panel of judges will award prizes for the booths selected as the most original, decorative and neat, first prize \$75.00.

Anyone interested in donating hand made items or baked goods, working as a salesman or decorating the booth, please call Ruth Priestley at 682-6553.

Come out and join the fun! Freeze goodies for next Christmas or buy your stocking gifts early. When shopping at the MeadowBrook Village Mall, be sure and thank them for promoting this fund raiser.

## 50 States Theme For Next Quilt

The Quilting Guild, chaired by Mrs. Edna Bondurant, is busy with two projects.

The Bicentennial quilt, which depicted Oakland County sites and logos, is in the finishing stages. So finely quilted that even the reverse side plainly shows the design, it is almost ready to be presented to its new owner, Mrs. D. Bleakley.

Already the 1977 quilt has several blocks completed. This will be patterned after designs submitted in the 1920's and '30's to a woman's magazine, and updated when Alaska and Hawaii joined the union.

All 50 states will be represented in a beautiful, intricate vari-colored quilt.

It had been planned that tickets for a drawing would go on sale at our Ice Cream Social in August. However, the MeadowBrook Village Mall is allowing tickets to be sold at their charity bazaar April 28 through May 1, 1977.

There are now fifteen members in the Guild who with their skillful needlework, have made substantial contributions to this enterprise. Some have designed and made blocks and others have learned the old craft of quilting.

### QUILTING GUILD MEMBERS

Mrs. Cecil Bondurant	Mrs. Carmi O'Dell
Mrs. Roy Clifton	Mrs. Elsie Barey
Mrs. David Thacker	Mrs. Margaret Richie
Mrs. Donald McMillen	Mrs. Dorothy Shorter
Mrs. David Ewalt	Faye Donelson
Mrs. Jerry Kumler	Sue Baber
Mrs. James Lucas	Joy Crawford
Mrs. Warren Rice	



At the Victorian Open House Mrs. Cecil Bondurant in the one room schoolhouse.

## Endowment Fund Growth Vital

Interest From the investment of the Endowment Fund helps to maintain the grounds and buildings at Pine Grove. Even non-profit organizations must pay higher rates for fuel and electricity. Steady growth of the endowment fund aids in maintaining the fiscal health of the Society.

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Since the last Gazette publication in November, the following have contributed:

Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Balmer

### LIFE MEMBERSHIPS:

Mary Catherine Ellsworth  
Cecil E. Dumbrigue

MEMORIALS received for Florence Wallace from

Sandra K. Wallace  
Robert B. Wallace  
David C. Wallace

MEMORIAL received for Carol S. Cole from:

Maurice F. Cole

MEMORIAL received for Mrs. LaBar (Barbara) Stewart from:

Judge and Mrs. Donald E. Adams

## Past Time . . . and Future Doings

The Victorian Christmas Open House was very successful. Pine Grove was viewed by no less than 500 people. The hot mulled cider flowed and music filled the air. The enormous trees in the school and the parlor were gifts of Mrs. Kurt Bemman, Sr. Of Holly, Michigan.

The Quilting Guild afforded a look at a very old craft as they worked on the beautiful Bicentennial quilt during the festivities. The quilt was won by Mrs. D. Bleakley of Birmingham. The Bicentennial dolls were won by: Mr. & Mrs. W.M. Robertson, Mrs. Ardis Reed and Mrs. Marian N. Emery. Congratulations to you all!

Our traditional Annual Dinner for 1977 is under the able chairmanship of Mrs. Robert (Fran) Anderson. It will be held Thursday May 12 at the Kingsley Inn. Fran and her committee will have more details in the next Gazette. Circle that date and join us in May for a very enjoyable evening.

Our Historical Society was the recent recipient of a very important collection of papers and records.

Through the efforts of Mrs. Michael (Pat) Warren of Troy, the Lincoln Republican Club turned over four red leather scrapbooks containing bills, speeches, programs, letters and telegrams of their organization dating from 1889.

These papers were compiled by Harry Horton and Dorothy Rowley. Programs indicate that the Hodges House and the Opera House, now long passed into history, were often sites of their meetings. The collection will be of great interest to political researchers.

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Four publications per year has long been a hope at Pine Grove, our thanks to Mrs. Anna Baker Lane who is underwriting this issue of our Gazette.