



## IT'S ICE CREAM SOCIAL TIME!!!

The annual ice cream social will be held on Sunday, August 2nd at Pinegrove from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. There will be the usual entertainment, quilting demonstration, tours of the Wisner home and ice cream, lemonade and home made cakes.

The event will be highlighted by several interesting exhibits.

There will be an exhibit of model railroad and trolley cars in the schoolhouse prepared by Mr. John Fred Gibson of Pontiac from his extensive collection of model railroad equipment. The cars will be one-quarter inch scale models of equipment originally operated in the Pontiac area.

The ladies of the Society are arranging an exhibit of Victorian era clothing which will be shown on the second floor of the Wisner home.

Also on exhibit will be the Rex Lamoreux collection of Currier and Ives prints which will be on loan to the Society.

Janice Bell is the busy Chairman who is putting all of this together for your entertainment and enjoyment.

Take advantage of this opportunity and attend this annual event where you can meet old friends, make new acquaintances and just have a good old-fashioned time.

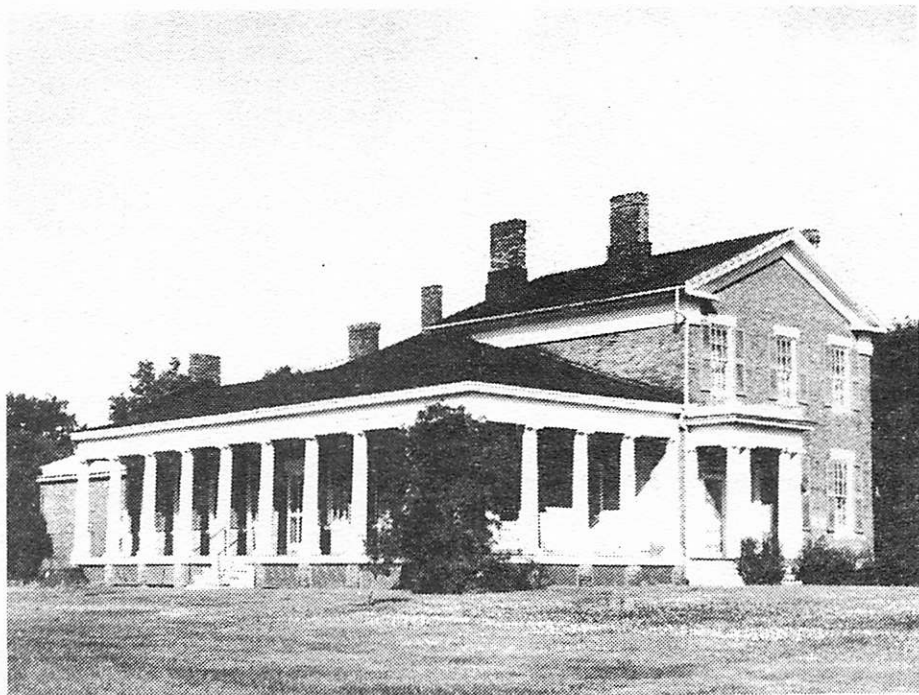
### Story of Pinegrove:

#### Governor Wisner Homestead

Few of the many historic homes of Michigan are wrapped in history and romance as interesting as that of Pine Grove, the homestead of Governor Moses Wisner, Michigan's thirteenth governor. The home, located at 405 Oakland Avenue in Pontiac, is the headquarters of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

The first entry in the chain of title of Pine Grove was a government entry dated October 20, 1825 showing the granting of the land by the United States of America to Nathaniel W. Mack. The land passed through several hands before being deeded by Joshua and Lucinda Terry to Moses Wisner on September 23, 1844.

Prior deeds conveying the property contain the words "together with improvements to said property". Just what these improvements might have been is not known, but it is thought that the back wing of the present house may have been a part of the "improvements". In the 1950's, Emil Lorch, Professor-Emeritus of the School of Architecture of the University of Michigan and Chairman of the Historical Society of Michigan's Committee on Historic Architecture, visited the Wisner house and expressed the opinion that "owing to the size and the spread of the house, it does not seem that it was all built at once". At the time of his visit he orally pointed out the



differences in the bricks used in various sections of the house and the different methods of laying the bricks. His judgment that it was "not all built at once" was reinforced when the Society received from the descendants of the Comstock family a contract, dated shortly after the purchase by Wisner, which is believed to cover work done at Pine Grove.

Correspondence in the Society's collection between Moses and Angeolina Wisner also give a few clues as to additions to and changes in the layout of the house. Physical evidence such as the break in the floor in the parlor and the inclusion of the seal of the State of

Michigan above the arch in the upstairs alcove add other bits of evidence.

Consideration of all of the above information would seem to indicate that Wisner bought a parcel on Saginaw Road, now known as Oakland Avenue, on which stood the back wing of the present house and that he subsequently built on a larger structure into which he and his small son, Edward, moved shortly after the death of his first wife, Eliza, in 1844. It was to this home that he brought his new wife, Angeolina Hascall, and here their children, Charles, Jessie and Frank, were born.

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## Museum Workshop Huge Success

Forty-two officials from various Michigan museums sharpened skills and exchanged valuable experience and information at the "Small Museum Workshop" held at Pinegrove on June 3. Co-sponsored by the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society and the Oakland County Cultural Council, the workshop's aim was to aid societies seeking to establish or maintain their own small museums or historic buildings.

The workshop was conducted largely in the newly restored carriage house, and partly in the Wisner home itself. Comments indicated that the scenic location enhanced the programs and contributed to its success.

A coffee and donut breakfast introduced the participants to a busy day of preservation techniques, management tips, and other topics. Classes were held in furniture, textiles, manuscripts and documents, administration, and oral history.

Society members Gretchen Adler, Virginia Clohset, and Connie Lektzian were joined by Henry Ford Museum Curator of Furniture Katherine Hagler and Michigan State University's Cathy Cyr, Curator of Textiles and Decorative Arts in conducting classes. The keynote speaker was Dennis Bodem, Director of the Jesse Besser Museum in Alpena.

Attendees came from across the state and each found a subject suited to his interest. Participants were led on a tour of the buildings and grounds after lunch, allowing them a perspective on the typical museum visitor's feelings and questions.

### Administrative Change

Officers and board members were greatly disappointed by the recent disclosure of Sandra McVicker that she must resign her position as Administrative Coordinator.

Sandie has moved with her family to Hornell, New York, where her husband has accepted the position of Marketing Manager with Dietary Consultants, Inc. She joined us on October 1, 1980 and her friendly, courteous and efficient administration of the Society's affairs will be missed by all of us.

Fortunately, we have been able to employ Mary Ann Treais as Sandie's replacement. Mrs. Treais is a native of the Pontiac area and has brought with her a keen interest in the history of Pontiac and the Oakland County area.

## President's Message

In the last issue of the Gazette, I wrote about my hopes for a broader range of interest by the OCPHS. I felt then and now that we can continue to maintain and preserve the Governor Moses Wisner House and family history and at the same time re-establish and expand our role as a county-wide historical society. Well, a great deal has happened since then!

In early June, the Society co-sponsored with the Oakland County Cultural Commission a workshop for museum needs. It was extremely successful for a number of reasons. First, we almost had more people than we could handle; second, it brought together history oriented people from all over the county and third, the lessons learned will be of benefit to all of us that participated. Those of us involved, felt that the OCPHS and the Cultural Commission provided a very rewarding service.

Our program for the Annual Dinner, as you know, focused on Pontiac's commercial architecture. Since then many requests have come in not only for a rerun of the program itself but for additional information on Pontiac's history and architecture. Again, an area in which we can offer a unique service and play a part in the future growth of our county seat.

The Guide Manual, which is mentioned in another article in the Gazette, has been a project I've wanted to see begun for several years. Thanks in large measure to Sandra McVicker, our past coordinator, it is indeed begun. It not only presents in great detail the Wisner family and it's history but information on the house and family artifacts. It also includes descriptions and pictures of the many artifacts in the Society's collections which have come from all areas of the county. In addition, the Manual offers our guides descriptions on the various aspects of the day to day lives of our pioneers. The Manual will continue to grow as further research is done and new artifacts are added. Best of all though, it will give our guides a source for study and will enable them to present a more comprehensive view of life in early Oakland County.

While we are striving to be of greater service, it is extremely rewarding to know that many are striving to be of service to us. Two groups in particular which have come to our aid are the Pontiac-Oakland Town Hall who contributed funds toward the restoration of the Wooten Desk and the Civic Improvement Committee of the Pontiac Branch of the Women's National Farm and Garden Association who have undertaken as their project the restoration of the Herb Garden at Pine Grove. Both of these efforts are greatly appreciated.

These are just a few of the many things that are happening at Pine Grove. There are many things planned for the future and many projects which need a patron. If there is an area or a project in which you have an interest, please join us. We have and are accomplishing a great deal but there is still much to do. Perhaps the most rewarding feelings of all though are the friendships that have been made through working at Pine Grove.

### Vandalism - A Recurring Problem

During the past few years vandalism has become a serious and costly problem in the preservation and maintenance of Pine Grove. So much so that the Society has been forced to install a sophisticated alarm system to prevent further break-ins and damage.

There have been numerous incidents of break-ins and malicious destruction of our property. Our insurance pays only a small portion of the expense of repairing the damage suffered by us.

All of these incidents induced the officers and board of directors to consider the installation of a more modern alarm system. After investigation, a contract was signed with Interstate Alarm Systems, Inc. for the installation of a complete system which protects the main house, the summer kitchen, the carriage house and the schoolhouse. By

means of sophisticated sensors and other wiring, a break-in or fire is immediately signaled to the Interstate headquarters. Interstate immediately notifies the police or fire departments of the occurrence and a response is made to the call. The system has now been installed at a cost of \$4475.00. A small monthly service charge is also paid.

Hopefully, in the future the new alarm system will act as a deterrent and help substantially to reduce future acts of vandalism.

### Society Acquires Cleaner

The Society recently acquired as a gift from Jay Smith of Ashburnham Avenue, Pontiac a new Eureka upright vacuum cleaner complete with attachments. This generous gift is deeply appreciated by the Society.

## Recent Interesting Accessions

Susan Metzdorf

*State of Michigan flag*

Mrs. Everett Peterson

*Genealogy of the Tracy, Backus,  
Hazen, Lord & Brewster families*

Miriam Grinnell

*Ancestry of the Grinnell Family*

Betty Adams

*4 volumes of "Michigan History",  
antique bookcases*

Mr. Lefebvre

*Articles on the 1908 Pontiac  
authored & published by him*

Mr. & Mrs. John Riley

*Family pictures & letters*

Mr. & Mrs. Maxwell Doerr

*6 Oakland County maps*

Mr. & Mrs. Pete Martin

*1867 Oakland County map, Flossie  
Dobson Martin's wedding apparel*

Lynda Jacobs

*History of the Dennis family*

Virginia Clohset

*"First Land Owners of Oakland  
County Michigan"*

Sandra McVicker

*Copper OCP&HS friendship vase*

Mrs. James Burke

*Cranbrook School yearbook*

## Restoration of Wooten Desk Appears Near

The Society recently received the good news that a benefactor has been found which will pay substantially all of the cost of restoring its "Wooten" desk.

The unique 1874 desk which was referred to in early advertising literature as a "business and professional man's office" has always been an object of great interest in Pine Grove and has long been in need of restoration and repair. The Pontiac Town Hall has agreed to contribute \$566.00 toward the restoration of the desk. An estimate obtained some time ago established the cost to complete restoration at \$700.00. We are confident the balance of the funds necessary to complete the project will be raised.

It has been planned to move the desk after restoration from the main house to a room designated for an office in the carriage house.

## Oakland County is Definitely on the Map!

Yes, our 1857 Oakland County Map is restored and back from Texas! Mary Frederickson, who completed the restoration at the Panhandle Plains Museum, included instructions for matting and framing our map. We are now in the process of securing a source

## Welcome-New Members!

We happily welcome the following new members to the Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society and look forward to their involvement in our programs. It's always exciting to see new interest in Pine Grove and Oakland County history!

New 1981 members include:

### Life Memberships:

Mrs. Roeberta Tobin

Mrs. Thomas Metzdorf

Master Michael Allen Kamlay

(Grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Priestley)

Mrs. Arthur Hoban

Mrs. Aaron Riker

### New Members:

Mr. and Mrs. Byron Zink

Dr. and Mrs. Jaime Aragones

Geoffrey Reppenhagen

Michael Perry

Gregory and Julie Dake

Donald and Kathryn Daggy

Irene Bakewell

Mr. and Mrs. Everette Schafer

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Williams,

children Tim and Mary

Kasle Steel Corporation

James Kurtz Steel Co.

Mr. and Mrs. Steward Dell

Mr. and Mrs. John Lee

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Brown

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Reynnells

May Griggs

Eugene Keech

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Howes

Mr. and Mrs. John Gayton

Titan Steel Co.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Johnson

Mr. and Mrs. William McKnight

Mrs. Eleanor Byrnes

Mrs. Charles Brady

Peter Lektzian

Mr. and Mrs. Jack McCulloch

Lynda Jacobs

Mr. and Mrs. Mark McGee

Mrs. Estelle Schottenfels

Alpha Delta Kappa

Mr. Joseph P. Grimm

Mr. and Mrs. Clark Kimball

for this purpose.

When our treasured map is ready for display, we will welcome the members of the General Motors Men's Club who very generously donated the funds for restoration, all of you in the OCP&HS and everyone who is interested in Oakland County history to come to Pine Grove and view it. It's truly a beautiful and interesting example of historic preservation!

## Historical Angels Column

Listed below are a number of our dedicated members and friends who have contributed generously of their time, labor and funds.

### Work Bee Participants:

Tom and Susan Metzdorf

Janice Bell

Barbara and Frank Peterzak

James Hess and friend Ken

Faye Donelson

Cecil Dumbrique

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hewitt

Sandy McVicker

### Special Angel Awards:

Janice and Bill Bell and son Alexander for making our yard look beautiful.

Cecil Dumbrique for the planting of flowers and cleaning up the Herb Garden

### Honorable Mention for Donations to Pine Grove:

The Round Table

Pontiac-Oakland Town Hall, Inc.

General Motors Men's Club

Edwin Adler - Food Town Super  
Markets

## "Tis the Season to be Guiding"

Welcome to Kathryn Daggy, Rosamond Haeberle, Louise Haskell, Sylvia Hickey, Thomas Mackie, Agnes Jensen, Lucy Johnson, Betty Rose, and Margie Walters who recently completed our guide training program and are now new enthusiastic Pine Grove guides.

Many of our guides have already received their copy of the new Pine Grove Guide Manual. If you're a guide and would like one, please call the office. Even if your interests at Pine Grove do not happen to include guiding, do stop in and look at our new manual which contains a wealth of information including many interesting descriptions, pictures, and a great deal of research.

So far, this year, approximately 1,800 visitors have toured Pine Grove. We thank our many faithful docents who have so generously shared their time and expertise to make this possible. Remember, as our tour program grows, so does our need for more guides. Are you interested in joining the Pine Grove guide group? Or, do you know someone who is? Please call the Wisner House at 338-6732. We'll be looking forward to your call!

## The Story of Pinegrove

*(Continued from Page 1)*

With Wisner's contemplated election as governor in 1858, it was apparent that new social obligations would follow should he be elected. There was no governor's mansion in Lansing. In fact, Governor Wisner stayed in a rented room when in Lansing. According to his granddaughter, Florence Clark Wallace, to meet these new responsibilities the parlor and parlor bedroom were turned into one larger room in which a false fireplace with marble mantel was installed, the wallpaper, rug, furniture and paintings still in the parlor were purchased and installed and a more appropriate room for executive functions became a reality. At the same time, the seal of the State of Michigan was placed above a little alcove room on the second floor and book cases with a built-in desk were constructed along the upstairs hallway. The dining room also received additional touches so that it, too, would be more suitable for larger social gatherings.

Although Wisner made his living by practicing law, he retained a love of farming which prompted him to buy sufficient land so that he might graze cattle, raise chickens, grow fruit trees and have both vegetable and flower gardens. It is estimated that at the time of his death, the Wisner homestead included approximately 185 acres. He built the necessary outbuildings: stock barns about three-fourths of a mile from the house on the west side of Oakland Avenue, a smokehouse, ice house and root cellar near the summer kitchen, a greenhouse with an entrance from the dining room and a carriage house and hen house beyond the other outbuildings. He and Angeolina together planted trees and flowers and Angeolina grew to love the home which they developed together. At one time, numerous pine and spruce trees grew on the property. Today, three remain framing the one room school. The grounds were carefully maintained by the Wisners. Hundreds of tulips bloomed in the spring and pahlia, calla day lilies, roses, geraniums, fleur de lis, verbenas and other flowers grew in profusion. Of the horse chestnut trees planted in the early 1850's, one remains. It was a beautiful, productive acreage of which the owners were proud.

Wisner did not run for a second term as governor. Instead, he turned his attention to organizing the 22nd

Michigan Infantry which trained at the Pontiac fairgrounds. On August 25, 1862, the 22nd Michigan left Pontiac for Kentucky with Colonel Wisner in command. Before leaving, Wisner conveyed the property on which Pine Grove was located to Angeolina Wisner, his wife, subject to the following condition: "This deed is intended to convey the 'Homestead' and farm on which first party now resides, reserving unto himself the possession, occupancy, use, rent, issues and profits of the aforesaid land for and during his natural life". Moses Wisner died on January 5, 1863 in Kentucky.

Angeolina Hascall Wisner maintained Pine Grove as her home until her death in 1905 although she often spent winters with her children elsewhere. During Mrs. Wisner's later years her daughter, Jessie Clark; Jessie's husband, Alpheus (a Detroit banker); and their daughter, Florence, spent their summers at Pine Grove. On Mrs. Wisner's death, the property passed to Jessie Wisner Clark and then to Florence Clark Wallace.

In 1945, Mrs. Wallace sold the house and remaining outbuildings to the Oakland County Pioneer and Veterans Historical Foundation which subsequently became the present day, Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. She also gave the Foundation many of the Wisner family furnishings, including the parlor furniture and some dining room and bedroom pieces. At the time of the purchase the root cellar was still standing (but in disrepair) as was the smokehouse, summer kitchen, privy and carriage house. The root cellar collapsed and was rebuilt in a cooperative effort by laborer, carpenter and bricklayer unions and state and local vocational education departments. The privy was torn down and rebuilt, using whatever original pieces could be salvaged, and the summer kitchen was restored, partially through grants from federal and state historic preservation programs. The carriage house was torn down by the City of Pontiac due to its hazardous condition and a building with similar exterior features was constructed on the original site as a bicentennial project with assistance from state, county and city bicentennial commissions and the Northeast Oakland Vocational Education Center. Both porches on the house have been restored. In each instance substantial matching gifts of time and money have been given by members, friends, local organizations and foundations.

This then is the saga of a venerable historic home which continues to be the home of the Society, an outstanding example of mid-nineteenth century architecture and a continuing exhibit of the culture of our fore-bearers which is enjoyed annually by hundreds of Oakland County school children and adults.

\*This article has been prepared by the Editor from materials compiled by Elizabeth Adams and Ruth Priestly in the preparation of the Society's Master Plan.

ADDENDUM: The recent project involving the raising of the rear portion of the Wisner house resulted in the discovery of numerous artifacts which were buried near the house foundations. These are currently being studied by Charles Martinez and it is hoped we may report further significant facts concerning the history of the house at a later date.

—The Editor—

## Pine Grove Hours

The office and house are open daily from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., except Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Summer tours are conducted from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.

## In Memoriam

We regret to report the deaths of the following members:

Mr. Maurice E. Hammond  
Mr. Harcourt S. Patterson  
Mr. Lawrence Luzod  
Mr. Draper Allen  
Mr. F. Warren Rice  
Mrs. Neil Bentley  
Mrs. Lyle Hoard  
Mrs. Ada Eames  
Mrs. L. L. Dunlap

## All About The One Room Schoolhouse

On April 15th, the members of the board of directors enjoyed a special talk presented by Marjorie Bourns, a native and lifetime resident of Milford, on the history of the one room schoolhouse in Oakland County.

Mrs. Bourns recounted many of her interesting and amusing experiences as a one room school teacher. Her audience thoroughly enjoyed her very interesting description of this very important institution which was the forerunner of our present rural school system. Her presentation was also very helpful in informing the board members as to how our own one room Drayton Plains School was operated many years ago.