



*YOU ARE
CORDIALLY INVITED...*

Sunday, December 6, 1981

VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Featuring a Tour, Music, Children's Program,
Mulled Cider and Holiday Cookies
DONATION: Adults \$2.00, Children \$1.00

Tuesday, December 8, 1981

CANDLELIGHT MUSICALE

7:30 P.M.

Featuring Selections of 19th Century Music
Champagne, Punch and Light Refreshments
DONATION: \$7.00 Per Person
By Reservation Only - Limited to 40 People

Thursday, December 10, 1981

*AFTER SCHOOL
GROUP TOURS FOR CHILDREN,
BY APPOINTMENT*

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Hanging of the Greens Set for Wednesday, December 2nd at 9 a.m.

All board members and other interested members are needed to join in this festive occasion when we will decorate Pine Grove for our Victorian Christmas Week. Plan to don your work clothes for this fun and busy day.

Please indicate your interest on the flyer enclosed. And, on Wednesday, bring a sack lunch and lots of energy. Coffee and tea will be provided.

**DE-HANGING OF THE GREENS WILL
BE MONDAY, DECEMBER 14TH
YOU'RE NEEDED THEN TOO!!!**

Does Christmas Shopping Get You Down?

Visit our Potpourri Shoppe and purchase everything from ornaments for the Christmas tree to wall hangings; marbles and a draw string bag; bisque dolls and kits; kitchen accessories; paper dolls; interesting books; and many unusual stocking stuffer items. We also have some new unusual wooden gift items.

Highlights of Victorian Christmas Week

All of the buildings of Pine Grove will be decorated in the traditional holiday theme.

Musical entertainment for the Victorian Open House will be furnished by "The Merrie Madrigals" from Tuesday Musicales. There will also be piano and organ interludes provided by June Carlson of the Musicales.

In the schoolhouse there will be a display of Teddy Bears, from the very old to brand new. There will be an old fashioned Christmas tree trimmed by children. Skits depicting various holiday themes will also be performed.

Framed Victorian Crafts in the form of wreaths from the collections of the Society and Rex Lamoreaux will be on display on the main floor of the carriage house. The cellar level display will feature tools and implements and craft workers in action. An annex of the Potpourri Shoppe will be open on the main floor where you may purchase attractive and useful Christmas gifts.

The Candlelight Musicales will feature selections by Mr. Charles A. Wilson, piano; Mrs. Robert Bommarito, singer; and Mrs. Charles H. Hall, recorder.

Finally, Pine Grove will be open for daytime tours, by appointment, from December 7th thru 11th, inclusive.

President's Message

October 1980 to September 1981 has been a year of change, growth and development. We began the year with a new Administrative-Coordinator, Sandra McVicker. Her enthusiasm and ability were the catalyst for an interesting and productive year. Due to an out of state job change by her husband, Sandra was forced to resign her job in May of 1981. At that time MaryAnn Treais was hired. Her conscientiousness in working with Sandra for a smooth transition and her interest in our society are helping to bring a new vigor to our organization. With Sandra's and MaryAnn's help and the help of the many people who volunteer their valuable time, I think we have made great strides in maintaining and furthering the goals of the OCP&HS.

It would be impossible to list all the jobs done throughout the year by so many. The Society owes a large debt to all those who have contributed their time, talent and money to furthering our Society and history in Oakland County. I would like to mention a few members however who as chairmen of various committees have brought something extra and special to our efforts.

As Accessions Chairman, Susan Metzdorf and her committee have been organizing, cataloging and researching our artifacts. The many small items such as jewelry, medals, hat pins, etc., are now properly placed in riker mount boxes, a time consuming and very detailed job. Lottie Hudson has been doing the same with our collection of clothing and quilts, hats and other soft goods.

Allen Priestley assumed the role of editor of the Oakland Gazette in April of this year and brought organizational skills and real professionalism to our publication.

Susan Metzdorf and Lillian Paull chaired a successful Victorian Christmas and Ruth Priestley brought a new dimension to our holiday festivities by initiating a Candlelight Champagne Musical and a Wine and Cheese tasting tour and party. Ruth, as program chairman, also brought interesting and informative guest speakers to several of our Board meetings. We look forward to her plans for future programs and a lecture series in the coming year.

The constant care and feeding of the Gov. Moses Wisner Historic House and related buildings is under the able leadership of Faye Donelson. She has had a busy year. In addition to the usual repairs, a major repair was completed on the office structure. The old foundation under the back wall was giving way, causing the walls to move and crack. With Block Grant Money from the City of Pontiac, the Carl Johnson Co., a well known restoration firm, was hired to put a new foundation under the affected portion of the building.

Due to an increase in vandalism, we were forced to upgrade our alarm system for both breaking and entering and fire. This was a major expenditure and we have again been promised Block Grant Money to cover the cost.

Fran Anderson has, in addition to chairing a very successful Annual Dinner in May, been the chairman of the Policy and Procedures Committee. This very important committee has drafted policy and procedures that with Board approval insure stability and continuity in the various functions and operations of the Society. It is a job that has needed doing for a long time.

Janice Bell chaired one of the best organized Ice Cream Socials we have had. At the same time she and her Exhibits Committee did yeoman service bringing together our vast tool and farm implement collection for display at the Social. In addition, she serves as a guide, does spinning, made curtains for the Carriage House and was seen, with her husband, mowing the lawn at Pine Grove.

Another very important project begun this past year, is a Guide Manual. As an educational tool for our guides, it will help give tours of Pine Grove greater accuracy and interest. This is an on going project and one that requires a great deal of time and research.

The 1857 Map of Oakland County, the Herb Garden and the Wooten Desk have been restored with funds and/or time contributed by the General Motors Men's Club, the Pontiac Branch of the Women's Nat'l Farm and Garden Assoc. and the Pontiac-Oakland Town Hall. Melody Farms Dairy contributed the ice cream for our Social in August and have given us a freezer on permanent loan for future Socials.

As you can see, it has been an interesting, often hectic but very rewarding year. The Society hasn't grown much in numbers but it has developed greater skills and generated increased interest for history in the county. I think it has been a year we can all be proud of and next year we can work on the numbers by increasing our memberships.

Gretchen Adler
President

*The Officers, Board and Staff Wish All Our Members...
A Very Happy Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year.*

In The Good Ole Summertime



Ye Olde Time Ice Cream Social

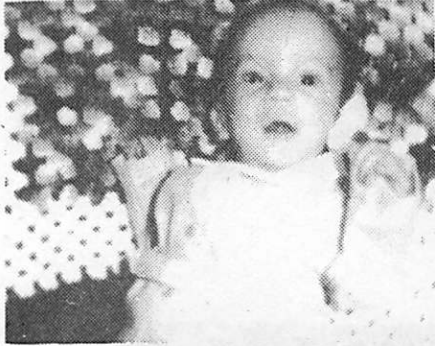
1. The band plays the old tunes we all love. 2. Wisner house tours are as popular as ever. 3. Margaret Ann Jackson and Gaylor Forman provide laughter. 4. Ice cream and cake are served under Pine Grove Trees. 5.

Edna Bondurant, the faithful quilter. 6. Lottie Hudson and Jan McAlpine demonstrate spinning. 7. President Gretchen greets youngest member, Michael Kamlay.

New Wisner Descendant is Born

David MacGregor Wallace (pictured below), was born July 31, 1981, the son of David C. Wallace Jr. and Jean Wallace.

He is the tenth generation of Wisners descended from Johannes Wisner who emigrated to America in 1701 and also a direct descendant of Governor Moses Wisner, whose home Pine Grove is the headquarters of the Society.



Genealogy Workshop

A Genealogy Workshop is being offered in the school house at Pine Grove beginning October 20th. The classes are scheduled for October 20 & 27; November 3, 10, 17 & 24; and December 1 & 8 and also include three field trips to the Oakland County Courthouse, the Burton Historical Collection and the Michigan State Library. Field trips will be on regularly scheduled class days.

The instructor for the Genealogy workshop is Dorcus Wolf. She is well known throughout the area as a former public school educator who went on to become a teacher in her second vocation, Genealogy. Among her interesting credentials we learned that she has taken classes at the New England Historic Genealogy Society, Salt Lake City and the World Conference of Genealogists in London, England. She has conducted classes locally, most recently in Clarkston.

Take a Chance on the Quilt

Take a chance on Edna Bondurant's last quilt. Buy tickets on the beautiful quilt that was made at the Governor Moses Wisner home this year by Edna and her committee. She has announced that this is the last quilt that the committee will make.

Did you know that the quilting frames belonged to, and were used by, the Governor's wife, Angelina Wisner?

Give the tickets to your friends and buy them a piece of history. They will be on sale at the Victorian Christmas at a price of \$1.00 each.

The Wooton Desk

A Status Symbol of the Victorian Age

By Ruth G. Priestley*

Our Wooton Desk at the Wisner House is now completely restored to its original elegance. It is a piece of furniture of which we can be rightly proud, for it not only is truly representative of our Victorian Age house, but also there are only a limited number of these desks still in existence.

During the 1870's and 1880's the Wooton Desk became a symbol of the Victorian's desire for flexibility in furniture, as well as for efficiency, order and gadgetry. It was a writing desk, filing cabinet, letter box and safe all in one. It came into being at a time when one man could carry on a good-sized business with only one large desk and could keep all his records in one file cabinet. By the end of the century, however, the Wooton Desk was becoming outmoded. Typewriters and duplicating machines were then coming into use and producing more and more records. Business could then be carried on more efficiently at a smaller desk supplemented by multiple filing cabinets.

Indianapolis, Indiana was the home of the Wooton Desk. The city, in the center of a great hardwood area, provided a ready supply of the woods used in the manufacture of furniture, wagons, carriages, veneers, etc. A number of such businesses had already been established there when William S. Wooton came from Richmond, Indiana in 1870 and began manufacturing school and church furniture and office desks.

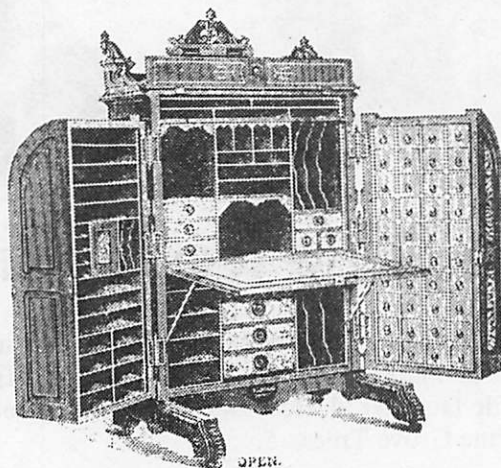
As evidence of his early interest in adaptive furniture, William Wooton, in 1868 had designed and patented a combined school desk and seat that could be folded together and made into

a single vertical unit. On October 6, 1874, the United States Patent Office issued Patent No. 155,604 to William S. Wooton for Wooton's Patent Cabinet Office Secretary, and in November articles of association were filed with the Indiana Secretary of State by William S. Wooton, John G. Blake and Harmon H. Fulton for the Wooton Desk Company, for the manufacture and sale of office desks, school and church furniture.

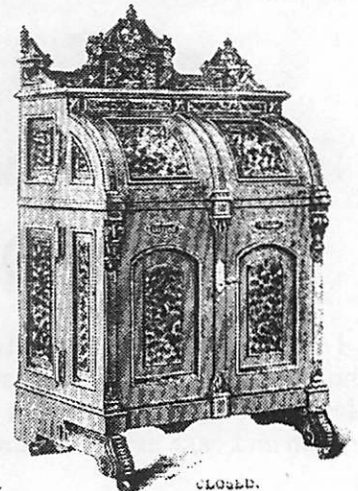
Advertisements were placed in the Indianapolis **Journal** for a "Cabinet Office Secretary, the most complete desk for filing documents ever made. Well adapted to the use of county officers."

It didn't take long for this new concept in desks to capture the attention of the public and Wooton Desks were soon being shipped far and wide over the several railroad lines serving Indianapolis. By 1876 the Company was manufacturing 150 desks a month and in April of that year the firm moved into larger quarters on the site of a former piano factory.

Calling it the "King of Desks", the Company's catalog for 1876 stated, "the demand is steadily increasing. It is our aim to stand at the head in our line, and make our work a synonym of utility, durability and elegance." Newspapers, magazines, business trade journals all over the United States and England such as **Frank Leslie's Illustrated newspaper**, the **London Graphic**, **The Furniture Trade Review**, **Railroad Age**, all regularly carried advertisements for Wooton Desks. The **Graphic** in London advertised the desk as having "one hundred and ten compartments all under one lock and key. A place for everything and everything in its place. Order Reigns Supreme, Confusion Avoided, Time Saved, Vexation Spared." (Continued on page 6)



STANDARD GRADE DESK OWNED BY SOCIETY



CLOSED.

Richard Hewitt Honored at Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday, September 16th at 7:00 P.M. in the Carriage House at Pine Grove.

New members, Rosamond Haeberle, Donald Daggy and Katherine Daggy, were elected to the Board of Directors. Richard Hewitt, Betty Hoard and James Renfrew have retired as members of the Board. The treasurer's report confirmed that the Society is financially sound. The membership rolls remain constant.

Rex Lamoreaux presented an interesting talk describing his collection of baskets made by Great Lakes Indians and his burl bowls which were on display.

In a surprise move by President Adler, Betty Adams and several others, Richard Hewitt, who was retiring from the Board of Directors after many years of faithful service, was honored. Refreshments were enjoyed at the close of the meeting.

Society Participates in

The Oakland County Cultural Council extended an invitation to members of our Society to take part in the Art Train visit which was at the County Complex from November 4th thru November 9th. Many of our members took the docent training program and manned one of the cars all day on November 7th doing arts and crafts.

Simultaneously our Exhibits Committee had displays of Children's toys, old purses, bonnets and shawls in four display cases located throughout the courthouse building.

Who Are You?

This is a story about four people named everybody, somebody, anybody and nobody.

There was an important job to be done and everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but nobody did.

Somebody got angry about it, because it was everybody's job.

Everybody thought anybody could do it, but nobody realized that everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that everybody blamed somebody, but nobody accused anybody.

Active members are our most important resource.

You are active.

You are somebody.

Faye Donelson Fights the Battle of Maintenance and Repair

Keeping a historic home in good repair is a never ending job. The care of Pinegrove is no exception.

Faye Donelson, as Chairman of the Maintenance and Grounds Committee, carries on a never ending campaign to keep our headquarters home in repair.

Recently a new hot water heater was installed but shortly after, due to a leak in the plumbing, it was necessary to temporarily halt the operation of the heater. Repair of the leak was required before use of the heater could be resumed.

The raising of the settled portion of the rear of the Pine Grove house was another project requiring the attention of Faye's committee.

Another major maintenance project which is currently being negotiated is the upgrading of the electrical system in Pine Grove. This work will, among other things, involve installing an electric stove circuit in the kitchen, separate circuit in the office for the copy-machine, installing wall outlets in all bedrooms to eliminate the use of extension cords for flood lights and the re-wiring of chandeliers in the dining room, entry room, main parlor and ladies parlor. In order to qualify under our block grant, this project must be supported by competitive bids and approved by the appropriate authorities. Hopefully, this will be achieved in the near future and the work performed.

A recent city inspection precipitated required repairs to our property at 32-34 Wisner Street. All outside wood surfaces were scraped, sealed and painted. Caulking was replaced. Cement work was repaired and the electrical system was brought up to Code. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were installed.

In the meantime, Faye continues to pursue such other tasks as arranging for repair of vandalism and damage by natural elements. She deserves a great vote of thanks for all of her help.

Winner of Doll Raffle

Grace Walther of 69 Euclid Avenue, Pontiac was the winner of the By Lo Baby Doll Raffle at the Ice Cream Social. The doll was dressed by Edna Bondurant. The winner happily announced that the doll will be added to her granddaughter's collection.

Historical Angels Column

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

Frank Peterzak: For the innumerable jobs done in the carriage house cellar.

Kitty and Don Craggy: For doing a little bit of everything and such nice people to have around.

Clarke Kimball: For donations of wood for shelving, flowers and so much gardening.

Bob Reynnells and Jack Moore: It's so nice to have some men around the House. All the many jobs they have done wouldn't have been done without them.

Welcome New Members!

We welcome the following new members. Their interest in the Society and its activities is deeply appreciated.

ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Mrs. Joyce R. Kesslring

Mrs. Ann McBrearty

Mr. E. M. Metzendorf

Mrs. Brian M. Tilley

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas C. Treals

Mr. Pingree Hazen

Mr. Harold Haskins

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Fell

Ms. Joan Rogers

Mrs. Phyllis Harker

Mrs. Sherman Beeler

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Moore

Mrs. Anthony Rogers

LIFE MEMBERS:

Mrs. Ora Porritt

Mr. and Mrs. Anson G. Raymond

Mrs. Richard Hewitt

In Memoriam

We regret to report the deaths of the following members:

Elmer E. Harger

Mrs. Hazel Baumgartner

Hon. Clark J. Adams

Crafts in Action

During October and November, the Crafts Committee, along with many other volunteers, have met on Wednesday mornings and worked on crafts and articles to be sold in the Potpourri Shoppe at Victorian Christmas time. They have also made decorations that will be used on the Victorian Christmas tree in Pine Grove's parlor. Behind the scenes, in his home workshop, was a generous Donald Craggy who has created and is contributing for sale numerous gift items. Good Job Crafts People!!!

The Wooton Desk Cont.

The Wooton Desk, when closed, resembled a panelled cylinder-front desk with a cupboard base. The front opened vertically from the center, with the two doors opened out to reveal the right one filled with pigeonholes and the left divided into vertical and horizontal shelves. On most models the left door contained an exterior letter drop. The main carcass had four drawers in the lower section, surrounded by vertical shelves on the right, horizontal shelves on the left. A writing flap, when lowered revealed several additional drawers, shelves, pigeonholes and compartments. In some models the writing flap rested on cast openwork metal brackets, in others on sliding metal rods. A narrow flap, hinged across the top, when raised also had several shelves or pigeonholes. The desk rested on bracket feet and could be rolled about easily on sets of double casters. When not in use the Wooton Cabinet Secretary could be folded up, locked and put away.

The basic Wooton Desk was made in four grades: Ordinary, Standard, Extra and Superior. Each could be ordered in three different sizes with the cabinets finished in woods and hardware according to the grade selected. Prices ranged from \$90.00 for the smallest Ordinary grade to \$750.00 for the largest Superior.

The Ordinary was a simple, functional desk, with little ornamentation. The Standard grade had veneered front panels with "Berlin bronze hardware" and was finished in "French Polish", while the most expensive Superior was described as having "marquetry in splendid style, an interior of holly or satinwood, ebony trim and Gold enameled hardware entire." The cornice of this model, in 1875, had a pair of urns and two griffins flanking the central pediments as well as two lion heads with rings in their mouth at the front corners. The cornice design could be varied in several styles to suit the customer. The desk owned by John D. Rockefeller had a leafy design, while the one owned by Ulysses S. Grant has an eagle on its cornice, though some of the other detailing is missing. This desk is now in the restored newspaper office, in Old Town, San Diego, California.

The Wooton Desk Company also made a Ladies Secretary similar to the basic Wooton Desk but slimmer with a shelf across the top cornice and a monogram on the exterior of the writing flap, but without a letter slot or name plaque.

Still another style was the Rotary Desk, coming in single or double pedestal, flat or slanted writing surfaces, slant top in two heights, roll or cylinder tops, stand-up variety of cashier's desk and a double pedestal counting-house desk where the writing surface could be raised. These desks were made in only the Standard and Extra grades with prices ranging from \$30.00 to \$225.00. The Company noted, "We also furnish these desks in Ebony and Gilt finish, when desired. The whole exterior of these is ebonized and filled with gold, striplings and ornamentation. These are very showy."

Lawyers, bankers, railroad men, newspaper editors, and educators, as well as the county officials for whom they were first recommended used Wooton Desks. Sidney Lanier, Joseph Pulitzer, Charles Scribner, Jay Gould and Governor Larrabee of Iowa are known to have had them. Spencer Baird, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution from 1878 to 1887, owned a Standard Grade, size 2, Wooton Desk. Another Wooton Desk at the Smithsonian is that of Dr. Edward Hofma (1859-1936) a physician, banker and State Senator from Grand Haven, Michigan. The cabinet and cornice of this desk resembles parlor organ designs of the period and is probably an Ordinary grade. The Wooton Desk at the Wisner House is a Standard grade, having a walnut cabinet with birds-eye maple veneered door panels. Brass-plated steel was used for the locks, hinges, letter drop and name plaque. This desk was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Whitlow to the Wisner House and its original owner is unknown at this time.

The immense and immediate popularity of the Wooton Desk prompted the Company to warn against patent infringement, but other firms soon were making Rotary Desks and variations of the Wooton Desk. Joseph A. Moore, who was Wooton's general manager in 1876, took out a patent for a "Cabinet desk of two wings, pivoted or hinged to a common shaft upon which wings rotate in opening or closing the desk. In 1879, he established the Moore Combination Desk Company. Benjamin Harrison had one of the Moore Desks in his law office in Indianapolis. The cardboard file boxes in the pigeonholes were identical to those in desks made by the Wooton Desk Company that are in the Smithsonian collection. Henry H. Wiggers of Cincinnati, Ohio patented another variety of the Wooton Desk. One of the Wiggers desks is in the Heinz House at Greenfield Village.

In 1880 the Wooton Desk Company was listed as the Wooton Desk Manufacturing Company and that same year William Wooton moved to Danville, Indiana. Although the desk and the company bore his name, it appears that he had little to do with the running of the company. After 1876 he was no longer listed as an officer of the company.

On October 4, 1881 William Wooton was granted his last patent for a cabinet desk, with half-interest given to A. J. Kempleman, who had been an officer of George H. Grant and Company, the firm with which William Wooton was associated in Richmond, Indiana before coming to Indianapolis in 1870. There are no known examples of this desk.

Ownership of the original Wooton Desk Company appears to have changed hands several times. An advertisement for Wooton Desks appeared in **Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper**, in February 1885, and gave the manufacturer as Haynes, Spencer and Company, Richmond, Indiana. When a new company, the Wooton Office Desk Company, was incorporated in Indianapolis in 1892, two persons signing the articles of incorporation were also on the board of the Indianapolis Cabinet Company, and in 1896 Lewis V. Horton, a former secretary and later manager of the original Wooton Desk Company, was listed as secretary of the Wooton Office Desk Company, having the same location as the Indianapolis Cabinet Company. No mention of the manufacture of the Wooton Desk has been found after 1898.

All information for this article was taken from **The King of Desks: Wooton's Patent Secretary**, by Betty Lawson Walters, Smithsonian Institute Press, 1969.

*RUTH G. PRIESTLEY is First-Vice President of the Society and a graduate of Oakland University.

Lecture Series Planned

Ruth Priestley, Program Chairman, has announced that a series of historical lectures will be held at Pine Grove in the spring of 1982. Final plans will be set forth in the next edition of the Gazette.

Tour Fees Increased

The fees for tours of Pine Grove were recently increased. The rates now in effect are:

Students (K thru 12) &
Senior Citizens\$ 1.00
Other Adults\$ 2.00