



SOCIETY TO JOIN SYMPHONY IN GALA AFTERNOON

For a joyous afternoon of fun, entertainment and refreshments you are cordially invited to attend the Society's Annual Ice Cream Social to be held at Pine Grove on Sunday, August 1st from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Tickets will cost \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children (under twelve). Special significance is attached to this year's affair in that it is being held jointly with a free concert of the Pontiac-Oakland Symphony to be held at 4:00 p.m. in Wisner Stadium adjacent to Pine Grove.

The "Sons-O-Scotia", a Scottish bagpipe band from Lake Orion, will perform during the Social with authentic Scottish tunes. Elsewhere on the premises, a Victorian music box supplied by Don Daggy will play its merry tunes.

Displays of interest to everyone are planned. World Fairs' memorabilia will be on display in the schoolhouse, there will be a quilt display in the Wisner house, craft demonstrations will take place in a tent on the lawn and soap making will be demonstrated near the summer kitchen.

If you have World Fair souvenirs from any fair you are invited to loan them for display. Guides are urgently needed for the Wisner and carriage houses and summer kitchen. Call 338-6732 to volunteer.

Of course, there will be ice cream, lemonade, iced tea and all kinds of good home made cakes for your eating pleasure. As an added treat, the maintenance crew will be selling hot dogs to raise funds for maintenance purposes.

A contest, "Get Ready to Tell a Tall Tale", will be run by Margaret Ann Jackson in the schoolhouse. Anyone may enter and prizes will be awarded. Your "tall tale" must last no longer than three minutes, however.

Parking will be available in the Wisner School Lot adjacent to Pine Grove and in the Oakland Avenue Evangelical Presbyterian Church Lot on the east side of Oakland Avenue. Handicapped parking only will be allowed on Pine Grove property adjacent to the one-room schoolhouse. Boy scouts will be on hand to direct parking.

Plan to stay for the symphony concert. A program of popular and light classical music will be presented. The audience is invited to bring lawn furniture or blankets and to set on the stadium field to enjoy the informal one hour concert. In the event of rain, the concert will be held at the Pontiac Central High School Auditorium.

AARON RIKER - THIRD GENERATION DOCTOR

Taping personal memoirs is the most recent method of preserving history, particularly local history. Events of times past, in the voice of one who lived those times, give unique color to our corner of the world as it used to be.

A taped interview with Dr. Aaron Riker was made February 15, 1975, a month before his 80th birthday. This is a condensed account taken from those tapes, as recorded by Dr. Riker.

Connie Lektzian, Recorder*

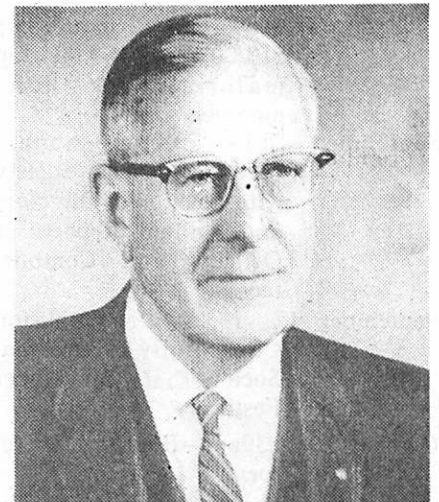
The Riker family originally came from Holland. The name, by the way, was van Ryken. Somewhere along the way it was changed to Riker. They settled in the east and at one time owned most of Long Island. Today about the only piece of land bearing our name is Riker's Island.

Marcus Riker settled in Independence Township in the 1830's. My grandfather, the first Dr. Aaron Riker, was born in the east. He

graduated from Albany University Medical School, which had a three year course at that time. It was considered one of the best medical schools. He took a lot of post graduate studies. He was not only a general practitioner, he was a surgeon as well, a typical horse and buggy doctor. He practiced in White Lake Township and then went to Fenton. He was surgeon for the Grand Trunk Railway, too. He died about 1910 and worked until the last five years of his life. Oh, yes, I remember him well.

My father, John, and his brother, Eugene, graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School. My dad taught Materia Medica under Dr. Vaughn for seven years after he graduated in 1890.

My uncle, Eugene, in the meantime, had set up practice in the little town of Palmer, Michigan, near Chelsea. He asked my dad to take over for him dur-



ing a two week's vacation. Dr. Eugene was a family doctor and did about everything. My dad said in that two weeks he never had his clothes off except to take a bath. That decided him right then that he didn't want a general practice. He persuaded my uncle to go to Europe with him to take more post graduate courses. For a whole year, they studied in Vienna, Heidelberg and England.

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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- July 21 - 7:00pm—Board of Directors - Jack Moore will present a slide show and lecture on "Wild Flowers of Michigan". Public is invited.
- August 1 - 1:00 to 4:00pm—Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social. Featuring ice cream and cake, cold drinks, tours, and special craft demonstrations.
- 4:00 p.m.—Pontiac-Oakland Symphony Free Concert at Wisner Stadium.
- August 18 - 9:30am—Board of Directors
- September 8 - 10:00am—"How to make Herb Wreaths" Workshop. Call the office for reservations. Cost - \$18.00
- September 14 - 1:00pm—Genealogy classes for beginners will be taught by Dorcus Wolf. Classes will run for nine weeks including four field trips. Registration for classes must be received by September 3rd with a maximum of 14 students. Cost - \$18.00 for members; \$18.00 plus \$4.00 for materials for non-members.
- September 15 - 7:00pm—Annual Meeting of the Society with Election of Directors and Annual Reports of Officers and Committees.
- September 17, 18 & 19—Clarkston Community Historical Society Crafts and Cider Festival
- October 20- 9:30am—Board of Directors

The Herb Wreath Workshop will be taught by Carol Czechowski. Reservations and fees should be in the office one week prior to commencement of classes. Minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 per class.

GUIDES ARE NEEDED

We are always in need of more guides. Please volunteer to become a guide. Call the office (338-6732) and leave your name and phone number. You will hear from us soon.

BOARD ADOPTS MASTER PLAN

After many months of careful study and deliberation the Master Plan Committee has prepared a plan to serve as a comprehensive guide for the future growth and conduct of the affairs of the Society and for the development, preservation and use of the properties owned by the Society. The plan was presented to the Board of Directors and adopted at its April meeting.

The purposes of the Society are clearly set forth. A detailed history of the Society and Pine Grove, its historic headquarters property, are contained in the plan. Results of archeological research are described and reveal interesting facts about the properties. Physical data describes the present buildings on the property.

The plan highlights a general development plan for the existing buildings and sets forth ambitious plans for future buildings and improvements aimed at making the Society and its properties the focal point and central repository for Oakland county history. It concludes with a comprehensive list of suggested activities which will insure the future growth of the Society, serve to broaden its scope and insure its continuance as a vital part of Oakland county.

The Committee, having acted under the able leadership of Betty Adams, is to be commended for its work and the plan will supply much needed guidance and direction for the future activities of the Society.

EDNA BONDURANT WEDS

Wedding bells are ringing for one of our most valuable long time members. Edna Bondurant was married on June 26th at the First Congregational Church of Pontiac to Rev. Arthur Tiffen of Crown Point, N.Y. While she will have to move away from us, she knows that we will always remember her in so many ways.

Edna has been the Society's Treasurer for the past four years and did an excellent job, with all of its great demands. In her spare time she has been head of the Quilting Committee. Edna has spent countless hours teaching craft classes and filling the house with piano music during tours. All this in addition to the many hours spent on church work and "Mother's of Men in Service". We give Edna and Arthur our best wishes and much happiness in years ahead.

RECENT INTERESTING ACCESSIONS

Space does not permit us to acknowledge here all of the many accessions which are received by the Society. Listed below, however, are a few of the interesting and unusual gifts which were thought worthy of mention:

SUPER BOWL XVI MEMORABILIA:

- Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Adler
Pom-pom, miniature radio in Coca Cola can, programs and newspapers.
- Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Kearns
San Francisco 49ers ... coffee mug, pennant, license plate, tee-shirt. Cincinnati Bengals ... license plate. Super Bowl XVI ... tee shirt, pennant and magazine.
- Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Beckwith
Commemorative wall plaque etched and engraved with the team names, scores and pictures of the Silverdome.

If anyone has official souvenirs of the Super Bowl to donate, please call the office.

OTHER INTERESTING ITEMS:

- Oakland County Genealogical Society Book; **First Land Owners of Oakland County, Michigan.**
- Mr. Ralph Swan
Manuscripts: Histories of "Ball Family of Bloomfield Hills" and "Swan Family History 1600-1975"
- Mrs. Douglas Hoard
Papers, clippings and genealogy of Quarton Family of Birmingham
- Mrs. Frank Blakeslee's, nee Durkee, scrapbooks
- Mr. Rex Lamoreaux
Sulky
French Limoges Tea Set
Forging tools
- Mrs. Kenneth J. Campbell
Marriage certificate of Pardon Doty and Lora Pratt Doty
- Miss Alice Serrell
Map: Revolutionary War Battlefields (1775-1781)
- Mr. Donald Campbell
Newspapers: Northwest Oakland County Herald Advertiser
- Mrs. Pearl Strickland
Fashion program by Waite's Department Store
- Mr. Homer Liming
Polk's Birmingham City Directory - 1949
- Mr. & Mrs. Allen Priestley
Program: 1982 NCAA Indoor Track Championship

Then they came back to the States and went to Johns Hopkins and New York Medical College. The two of them were among the first to set up an eye, ear, nose and throat clinic in Detroit. Eventually my father came back to Pontiac permanently and my uncle went to Flint. They got together for consultations on many, many occasions.

My dad's first offices were located in the Masonic Temple building above the old W.B. Anderson grocery store, that's near the south-east corner of Huron and Saginaw. Waite's store was at the corner.²

In 1905, my dad was mayor of Pontiac. That was the year the new courthouse was dedicated. He helped lay the cornerstone. I stood in his office right across the way and watched the ceremony. I don't remember that the town was decorated for the occasion but there was a huge crowd. Horses and buggys parked all down the street, in the livery stables, and around by Dr. Galbreath's. Of course, my dad, being mayor, made a speech. Jimmy Lynch gave a speech and so did Dan Davis. Do you remember that big clock that used to be (outside) in the tower of the courthouse? Well, Dan Davis gave that clock. It was too bad that when the courthouse was torn down, nothing was saved of that clock.

When I got a little older, long before I went to the University of Michigan, I used to go out on calls with my father. I drove the horse and buggy for him sometimes. I got a start on my education going in and listening to him talk to his patients. He got from \$10 to \$25 for an operation - tonsils, cataracts. Once in a while he didn't get paid at all. I remember a couple of times he got 50¢. But a dollar was a dollar in those days. People might pay him with vegetables, eggs, bushel of potatoes, whatever they had. I remember once he packed up my brother, the office nurse and me and went to the little town of Commerce. It took us almost two hours of driving. He did a cataract operation on the kitchen table. In those days, sand bags were put on either side of the patient's head so they couldn't move, and the nurse never left his side. A lot of people got pneumonia because they couldn't move around. I don't remember my father ever losing a patient. Of course, in the field of eye, ear, nose and throat, there wasn't as high a risk.

Some of the best doctors in the country were here in the Pontiac area in

those days. Many of them came at the persuasion of Dr. E. A. Christian, head of Pontiac State Hospital. He was a marvelous man - marvelous. He believed in the therapy of work for those patients on the farm (hospital) grounds. He wanted to do more than take care of them. They raised all their own food—they became self-sufficient.

I was born in 1895 in the family home at the corner of Orchard Lake and Palmer - it's gone now - torn down some time ago. But my childhood memories were around the house that stood right where the Riker Building is today. My father built the Huron Hotel on Huron Street just past our house. He moved his office in there.

I graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1921 and went into practice with my dad. In addition, every day for five years after I went up there for classes. I was an alternate intern - came home in the afternoon and took care of patients in my office - started making house calls about ten at night. While I was going to school up there I found out my dad knew more about the eye, ear, nose and throat practice than my professors. About six months after I graduated, my dad took sick and died. I stayed there in the office at the Huron Hotel. I used to do as many as ten tonsillectomies a morning - put the patients right to bed in my office and sent them home in the afternoon if all went well. I had about ten beds there.

My mother built the Riker Building in 1928-29 in memory of my father. It was built for a medical center and a lot of doctors were in that building.

I was instrumental in getting St. Joseph Mercy Hospital to come to Pontiac in the early 1930's. Sister Carmelita was head of the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor where I was taking so much training and Sister Xavier was head of surgery. I believe it was Sister Xavier who was the first head of the hospital here. I remember having lunch with Sister Carmelita and the father of the Catholic church over here (St. Vincents). We discussed this move. Sister Carmelita was able to get the Order to agree to open a hospital here. Dr. Cy Darling's father was also influential in helping. In the beginning we had about 100 beds. Money was raised by subscriptions and donations from banks and businesses. The Sisters raised money, too. I was on the staff and started the eye, ear, nose and throat clinic - I was chief of that department for about forty years. Prior to

World War II, in 1934, I went abroad to study. Went to Vienna and other hospitals. I went back several times after the war, too, to attend clinics and lectures.

I brought a lot of good doctors here—Barker, Darling, Cooper and Fitzpatrick, to mention a few. Having good doctors brought more good doctors. We doctors were responsible for Blue Cross coming into existence. It was supposed to help the indigent who had incomes under \$1500 a year. Now even Henry Ford has Blue Cross. Things changed a lot. When I was in practice, I worked until late at night and most of Saturdays and Sundays. Physicians don't do that anymore.

After 51 years, I retired. But I've never lost my interest in medicine. Even today I attend many meetings of the medical societies that I belong to. Last year (1974) I went around the world with the International College of Surgeons of which I'm a member. Nineteen of us visited Athens, Vienna, all over - we not only attended lectures but we gave lectures, went to clinics and hospitals. Wherever I go, I visit hospitals and find out about new methods of medicine. Yes, I guess you could say my father and I made our mark in Oakland County.³

FOOTNOTES

1. Dr. Aaron Riker, the narrator of this oral history, was born March 21, 1895 and died October 18, 1976.

2. Waite's Store was originally located on the south-east corner of Huron and Saginaw with the W. B. Anderson Grocery store next to it on Saginaw St. Years later Waite's moved across to the north-east corner which was the original site of the Congregational Church.

3. It was hard to know what to leave out of this interview. Dr. Riker's enthusiasm for his profession was profound. He loved his work. In addition to all his other duties, he made the rounds at the old Contagious Hospital, attending the mastoids and ear infections that seemed to be the end result of scarlet fever. He welcomed the exchange of ideas with other physicians and stimulation of meeting other medical men. It seemed that he retired only so he could have time to learn more. He certainly did leave his mark on Oakland County.

*Mrs. Lektzian, a former Administrative Coordinator of the Society, is a member of the Board of Directors and in charge of our Oral History Program.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED

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

ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Dr. & Mrs. Kousak
Mr. and Mrs. Kuga Kojima
Mr. and Mrs. Takao Kojima
Mrs. Gertrude Petersen
Mr. Alex Rabe
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Risell
Mr. LaVern Robinson
Ms. Rosamond Carlson
Ms. Carol Dickinson
Ms. Barbara Fenton
Mr. James Fitzpatrick
Mr. Sam G. Harrison
Mrs. Harold Hunt
Northwest Oakland County
Historical Society
Big Lake Extension Club
Ms. Mary Jo Yates
Mrs. Jane Basinger
Mr. and Mrs. Howard J. Giffore

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Merle R. Voss
Mrs. Alice Serrell

LECTURE TO HIGHLIGHT JULY BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, July 21st at 7:00 p.m. in the carriage house at Pine Grove. It will conclude with a lecture and color slide presentation by Jack Moore entitled "Wildflowers of Michigan". Jack, who is one of our stalwart volunteers on the groundskeeping crew, has been collecting and identifying our state wildflowers for 20 years. The members and public are invited to join the Board in enjoying this interesting presentation.

NEW TREASURER ELECTED

At its June meeting the Board of Directors elected Kathryn (Kitty) M. Daggy as Treasurer of the Society to fill the unexpired term of Edna Bondurant who has resigned for reasons discussed elsewhere in the Gazette.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In May the Society held its 109th Annual Dinner. The featured entertainment was the handclapping music of the Ruffwater Stringband. I think all those that attended the dinner had a delightful and entertaining evening.

It is about Annual Dinners in general, however, that I would like to devote this column. The first section of Article I of our Society By-Laws states that "at least two meetings of the members shall be held annually: the annual business meeting and the traditional Oakland County Pioneer banquet." That is pretty specific: We must have an annual dinner!

It is impossible to please everyone but over the years we have tried. For many years the dinners were held in churches but many felt that attendance would improve if other facilities could be used. Various restaurants, country clubs and county facilities were tried but still there were complaints. The consensus was the dinners should be held at a centralized location and have adequate lighting and parking. We thought those problems were solved when the Silverdome was built. The banquet facilities at the Silverdome provided adequate parking, good lighting and as Pontiac is the county seat, it is reasonably centralized. Still there were complaints.

The time of the dinner has been another concern. Some feel it should be early so they can get home before dark. Others feel the dinner is held too early and doesn't allow working people enough time to attend.

Perhaps the biggest problem with regards to the Annual Dinner is its cost. Each year the dinner is a money losing event for the Society. Dinner chairmen have been instructed not to exceed \$10.00 per person because it was felt more people would come if we kept the cost down. Each year, however, the cost of food and labor goes up and banquet facilities must keep pace with these increases. As a result the \$6.00 or \$7.00 cost for food from a \$10.00 ticket is now \$10.00 for food alone. And instead of a variety of dinner items to choose from, we must settle for chicken each year.

If food were the only cost, the only problem would be, do we want chicken. But each year the cost for a program and/or entertainment as well as printing and mailing costs are absorbed by the Society.

As you can see, planning the annual dinner is not something we look forward to. Only one thing would make it all worthwhile and that would be a large increase in attendance. Each year I am amazed and frankly disappointed when out of a membership of 600 or so we average year after year about 100 people.

There are many people that feel that if the Annual Dinner was not mandated by our by-laws, it would be better to discontinue it. They believe the money and effort spent could be put to much better use. Wouldn't that be a shame. I don't think there are many other organizations in the entire nation that can attest to one hundred and nine annual dinners. No one really wants to stop a tradition as meaningful and important as the Annual Dinner.

This type of column is very difficult to write but I felt that you should all be aware of the problems and while we are not anxious for more complaints we are in need of thoughtful advice and suggestions. Without a doubt, some changes will have to be made and some re-thinking done regarding cost, location and entertainment.

Gretchen Adler

DIRECTOR'S PHOTOGRAPHS

A program is underway to photograph for the archives existing directors and available past directors of the Society. Connie Lektzian has been diligently supervising this undertaking.

Any director, past or present, who has not been photographed will have an opportunity at the Ice Cream Social on August 1st. Connie is arranging for a special studio to be set up on the upper floor of the carriage house and you may be photographed between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.

ART RESTORATION PROJECT LAUNCHED

Thanks to a grant of \$3000 from the City Arts Committee of the National Endowment for the Arts and a matching grant of \$3000 funded through the Michigan Museum Society and the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Society is beginning a project to restore the original oil paintings now hanging in Wisner House. The \$6000 will be used to restore four of the paintings.