



'TIS THE SEASON

Sunday, December 11, 1983

VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE

12:00 Noon - 4:00 p.m.

Featuring a Tour, Music, Children's Program,

Mulled Cider and Holiday Cookies

DONATION: Adults \$2.00, Children (under 12) \$1.00

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Wednesday, December 7, 1983

starting at 9:30 a.m.

A fun time for willing workers. Wear your
old clothes and bring a sack lunch.



HOLIDAY TOURS

(By Appointment)


December 8, 9 and 12 thru 16, 1983

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Special After School Tours

December 15, 1983

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.



Annual Meeting Report

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held in the carriage house of Pine Grove on Wednesday evening, September 21st.

Written reports from all of the standing committees were distributed to the members and verbal reports were also made by the officers and the Administrative Coordinator. Calvin Patterson reported that his audit of the Society's financial records disclosed that they have been accurately posted and maintained.

Priscilla Gayton and Robert V. Reynnells were elected as new members of the Board of Directors replacing retiring members Fran Anderson and Edna Bondurant.

The meeting concluded with a slide presentation and commentary by Connie Lektzian entitled "Over The Years". Connie has updated our collection of slides depicting the history of the Society taken from our extensive photo collection and presented a very interesting account pictorially and orally of the Society's birth and growth.

At the October meeting of the Board of Directors the 1982-83 officers were re-elected for another one year term.

Poinsettia Plants are Welcome

Would you like to help decorate Pine Grove with a lovely, living poinsettia plant during our Victorian Christmas celebration? You may help by loaning your plant for decoration purposes from Wednesday, December 7th thru Sunday, December 18th. You will still have your plant at home for your own holiday time.

New Look in our Library

Have you visited Pine Grove lately?

A "new look" is to be seen in our library area. Old file cases and book shelves which previously obstructed the view and caused "clutter" have been moved and rearranged. Also a new coat of paint has brightened up the place. Researchers now find the working area much more convenient and attractive.

Stop in and see what has been accomplished thanks to the efforts of Don and Kitty Daggy and Ruth Priestley.

Ice Cream Social

Our Annual Ice Cream Social was a huge success. Over 600 members and friends attended on a bright and sunny afternoon.

Many thanks to the many volunteers who made this party a success.

Christmas Shop at The Potpourri Shoppe

Our Potpourri Shoppe features many unusual gift items. Looking for something with a country primitive touch? We have hand crafted wooden miniature rocking horses and houses, angels and wreaths, potpourri in the bulk or made into balls; wreaths of grape vines or pine cones; aprons and tree ornaments of fabric; and knitted mittens and slippers. Also we have purchased for sale distinctly different decorated bags, stickers, Victorian miniatures and bisque doll kits.

The Shoppe is open Monday through Friday until December 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Make our Potpourri Shoppe your first stop for this year's holiday buying.

Annual Giving Time

You can further the purposes of the Society by a tax-deductible gift to the Endowment Fund.

President's Message

Our Society's annual celebration of Victorian Christmas is drawing near. Here one can step backward for a moment into the holiday festivities of an almost forgotten era.

The Victorian Age reached its height in America during the latter part of the 19th century, nearly 100 years ago. The home was the center of the family's activities. The love of over-ornamentation, when "more was better", was reflected in the decorations and preparations that were made for the holiday festivities.

Fresh cut evergreen boughs and roping, hung over every possible doorway, window, picture frame and mantle, adorned with bright berries, gave off a delightful pungent scent. In contrast, a current greeting card showed plastic Christmas greens, holly, mistletoe and poinsettias with the caption "the new smells of Christmas."

Home-made ornaments completely covered the Christmas tree, until little room was left for the wax candles, lit at the very last moment, lest the whole tree would go up in flames.

Food, and lots of it, was a very important part of the festivities. Preparations began early with fruitcakes, plum pudding, mincemeat tarts, spicy preserves filling the house with tantalizing-smells of what was to come on the feast day itself.

The turkey didn't always hold the place of honor at the holiday table to

Get the Christmas Spirit

We're getting excited about Christmas!!! Plans for our Victorian Christmas Open House are moving into "high gear".

Sunday, December 11th, is the day and the hours are from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Your visit to Pine Grove will be pleasantly accompanied by the strains of old familiar Victorian Christmas tunes played on the Wisner family piano and the old pump organ.

The usual tasty mulled cider and other beverages will be served in the carriage house along with our members' delicious home baked cookies. New exhibits of interest to all ages are being prepared. Our newly restored oil paintings will be on display.

Margaret Ann Jackson is preparing a highly entertaining and informative program for our one room schoolhouse. See the story on the next page.

Ample parking will be provided.

the extent it does today. By the late 1900's, ethnic groups then coming into our country brought with them their own holiday food preferences. For some it might be chicken and biscuits, or a fine roast beef with Yorkshire pudding. At my German grandmother's home a plump roast goose filled with apple and raisin stuffing brought sighs of delight. Whatever the choice, it had to be ordered early from the farmer or the local butcher shop and brought fresh to the kitchen. The grocery store had no frozen food section where one could buy the makings of the whole holiday meal, cook it in the micro-wave, and have the dishes back in the cupboard all within a few short hours.

The festivities back then emphasized feasting and visiting with relatives and friends rather than gift giving. Presents were generally simple, home-made personal ones. Santa Claus rewarded the good little boys and girls with simple little toys and perhaps some candy with fruit. The threat of a lump of coal for those who had misbehaved during the year was always a possibility.

What a difference 100 years has made! Yet, today we look forward as eagerly to the celebration of the season's festivities with just as much preparation and anticipation as did those of that earlier age. It's just accomplished a little differently.

Ruth G. Priestley

Lincoln and His Possible Visits to Pontiac

By W. Ernest C. Huthwaite *

The question of whether or not Abraham Lincoln visited Pontiac and the Wisner Home has been recurring for many years. For many years it had been said and believed that Lincoln visited Mr. Moses Wisner at his home on Oakland Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan and that he had stayed overnight as a guest there. Numerous efforts have been made throughout the years to verify such a visit.

For forty years the late Judd Robbins served as a reporter for the then Pontiac Daily Press and covered the news of Oakland County, Michigan. Mr. Robbins and the writer some years ago spent a whole afternoon at the Hodges House, a hotel then located at the southwest corner of Saginaw and Pike Streets, in an effort to learn if Mr. Lincoln perchance had in fact come to Pontiac at any time and stayed at that hotel. The Hodges House was built in 1838 and in 1962 was demolished in an urban renewal project. At the time of the completion of the hotel structure in 1838 it was said that the Hodges House was the finest hotel in America west of Buffalo, New York.

In our search for information we talked with the clerk and others about whether or not Lincoln had stayed in the hotel, and further tried to locate any hotel registers or records during the period from the opening of the hotel and thereafter. We rummaged through the attic of the hotel in search of old registers and other records of the past history of the place. We found none. The manager of the hotel, though helpful in our search, was able to give us only scant information of any records. Later we learned that it was the practice of the hotel management during that era that when the pages of its journal or record of registration was "used up" to paste plain sheets of paper on the already filled-up pages of signatures for additional and economical use. Mr. Robbins and I were disappointed, but our search discovered nothing to indicate any visit by Abraham Lincoln to Pontiac, Michigan.

It appears that the only time Lincoln was in Detroit, Michigan was in 1848. He was a passenger on the Steamer

Globe from Buffalo to Detroit on his way home to Springfield via the Great Lakes during the period from September 24, 1848 until October 5, 1848 (when he arrived in Chicago and registered at the Sherman House) The next day he appeared at a Whig Rally at the courthouse as the principal speaker. His address consumed two hours.

The Steamer Globe stopped briefly at Detroit, and it is unlikely that Mr. Lincoln had very much, if any, opportunity to visit anyone as far away as Pontiac, Michigan.

There is, of course, always the possibility that he did. The only time which has been definitely established of his appearance in Michigan was at Kalamazoo, Michigan at the Republic Convention held on August 27, 1856. His speech at the convention and the doings there are covered by the late Thomas I. Starr in his book entitled "Lincoln's Kalamazoo Speech". Mr. Starr was a native of Troy, Michigan, and "discovered" the speech which until his discovery had been forgotten.

Before the Steamer Globe stopped in Detroit, Michigan it had passed a place called Fighting Island on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. The island contained a strand. Mr. Lincoln noticed the island shore and the shoreline to the river and other features of the location. It is said that at that time he conceived the idea how stranded vessels on rivers could be floated again, and back in Springfield later he prepared plans and specifications which were the basis of a patent later granted to him by the United States Patent Office.

Previous to his embarkation at Buffalo on the Globe, Mr. Lincoln had been on a speaking tour of cities in Massachusetts, including Boston, which he made after the adjournment of the session of the United States House of Representatives of which he was a member from Illinois.

Mr. James F. Joy, the President of the New York Central Railroad lived in Detroit, and the railroad terminus at Detroit was at the foot of Third Street at the river. The Steamer Globe probably docked or stopped within a block or two east of the railroad station. Mr. Joy's office was at the station building, and while the idea may be farfetched, there could be the possibility that Mr. Lincoln visited him. This possibility bears no relationship to the question of whether Mr. Lincoln visited Pontiac.

It is noteworthy that Mr. James F. Joy retained Mr. Lincoln as legal counsel with himself in the case of the Illinois Central Railroad Company versus McLean County in the Supreme

Court for the State of Illinois at a later date.

Biographically Lincoln has always been a great subject of research. More books have been written about his life than any other mortal man. New material is being published each year. Research concerning him is and has been an ongoing quest, and it appears will continue unabated.

It would be helpful if any of the members of our historical society and/or the readers of the Oakland Gazette would write to the editor and send any and all information as to the "myth" of Lincoln's coming to Pontiac, Michigan. It would not be unnoticed and might provide worthwhile material to continue the quest and destroy the "myth".

*W. Ernest C. Huthwaite is an attorney practicing in Pontiac and presently a member of our Board of Directors.

Art Restoration

The fully restored oil painting "Girl and Arab" was recently returned to Pine Grove. Two other paintings, "Mill Crossing" and "Woman With A Turbin", are currently being restored at the Detroit Institute of Arts. It is expected that work on them will be completed and they will be back in Pine Grove prior to Christmas. A grant application for restoration of the remaining five paintings in the Wisner family collection is pending.

Roof Restoration Moves Forward

Grants to finance the repair and reconstruction of the roof of "Pine Grove", the Governor Moses Wisner Historic House, have been approved and bids are now being taken from area contractors. It is expected that the contract will be finalized by late November.

Work to repair structural weaknesses beneath the roof will be performed during the winter months and the actual installation of the new exterior roof will be completed in the spring after the worst of the winter cold has passed.

Investigation and research by Gretchen Adler and the project architect, Irene Rogala, has led to the determination that the original roof of Governor Wisner's day consisted of finely cut cedar shakes. Our restoration will be an authentic reproduction of this roof specially treated with chemical fire retardants.

"Merry Christmas" in the One Room Schoolhouse

This year we will present in the schoolhouse a "Tribute To Our Favorite Senior Citizen, Santa Claus". Displays of vintage and modern Santas, from chocolate to iron, are planned. If you would like to lend us any of your unusually old or unique Santas for our exhibit cases, which are locked and alarm-monitored, please inform us at Pine Grove by Thursday, December 1st.

We are inviting the Senior Citizens of Oakland County to participate in an essay contest in which they will write, in 100 words or less, a recollection of "My Most Memorable Christmas", based on true experiences. They will be judged and the top three winners will receive prizes, as well as be invited to participate in the schoolhouse program to read or tell their story. If they do not wish to participate personally, some one will read it for them. All entries will be on display in the schoolhouse for the enjoyment of those who visit during the Victorian Christmas and the tours that follow. All entries will become the property of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society and must reach the office at Pine Grove, 405 Oakland Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan 48056, by December 1st. The winners will be notified by phone or mail, so please print your name, address and telephone number clearly on your entry. Get out your pen and share your memorable Christmas with us.

"THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS" will be performed in a unique way full of surprises.... as well as a tribute to Santa. There will be audience participation in Christmas carols and a tableau honoring the "Year of the Bible."

Anyone who wishes to be a part of the activities in the schoolhouse should contact the office at Pine Grove, phone number 338-6732, or Margaret Ann Jackson, at 673-5794, as soon as possible, since your part will have to be mailed to you before December 1st. Performances will be at 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Please indicate the time you would be available for the program.

Clock Raffle

The J. & J. Beall Quartz Clock in a beautiful walnut case donated by Beattie Interiors will be raffled during the holiday season. The drawing will be held at Pine Grove on Monday, December 19th. Be sure to buy your tickets during the Victorian Christmas.

Society Inaugurates "Harvest of Crafts"

Saturday, September 24th, marked the inauguration of a new Society event. A "Harvest of Crafts" was held on the Pine Grove grounds from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thirty-three artisans representing twenty-five early American crafts ranging from calligraphy to weaving, from applehead dolls to wooden toys, from fabric crafts to etched glass, stenciling, tole painting and many others displayed and sold their products.

The Society sold refreshments and goods from the Potpourri Shoppe. A very successful used book sale was also held.

Kitty Daggy, Gretchen Adler and Susan Metzendorf were the willing volunteers who conceived the idea for the event and made it a very successful happening.

Calendar of Coming Events

December 7 - Hanging of the Greens
December 8 & 9 - Tours are available
December 11 - Victorian Open House
December 12 to 16 - Tours are available
December 19 - De-hanging of the greens
December 20 to January 3 - Closed for Christmas
January 18 - Board of Directors
February 15 - Board of Directors
March 21 - Board of Directors

Year of Volunteerism

President Reagan has proclaimed the National Year of Volunteerism.

We salute our many volunteers for a job well done. If you are not one of our volunteers, we would welcome your help.

New Members Welcomed

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

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Mrs. Donna Boles
Mr. Horatio B. Lewis II
Mr. Robert W. Page
Mr. Robert G. Payne
Mr. Rockwood W. Bullard III
Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. DeMarois
Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hagg
Mrs. Linda Cordone
Mrs. Eugene Hoisington
Mrs. Harold Kelly
Ms. Bernice Paterson
Ms. Marthe Scholes
Mrs. Elizabeth Buchanan
Mr. George W. Ellenwood
Mr. Jeffrey L. Hudson

The following members have upgraded their membership.

TO LIFE

Mrs. Jessie M. Shoup
Mrs. Richard Wright
Mrs. Donald J. McEvoy

TO BUSINESS

Mr. William Archambeau

In Memoriam

Sadly we report the death of the following members.

Mr. Harold Ward
Mr. Nelson Rich
Mrs. B. Franklin Leonard
Mrs. D.R. Lazelle
Mrs. Harold S. Goldberg
Mrs. Harry Pearce
Mr. Vincent E. Boyle
Dr. W.O. Roeser

Stones Still Needed

We are still seeking contributions of field stone to finish the exterior surface of the carriage house basement walls.

To All Our Members:

Best Wishes
For A Happy Holiday Season
and a Prosperous New Year

— The Officers Board and Staff

