

*The Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society
Officers, Board and Staff Wish All Our Members
A Very Happy Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year.*

Sunday, December 8, 1985

VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE

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

Featuring a Tour, Music, Children's Programs

Mulled Cider and Holiday Cookies

Donation: Adults \$3.00 Children (under 12) \$1.00

HOLIDAY TOURS

(By Appointment)

December 5, 6 and 9 thru 13, 1985

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

Special After School Tours

By appointment

PARKING

Wisner School Lot Adjoining Wisner House

Oakland Ave. Evangelical Presbyterian Church Lot

On East Side of Oakland Avenue.

PLEASE RETURN THE
ENCLOSED MEMBER
RESPONSE SHEET!!!

Volunteer Recognition

Beginning with this edition of the Gazette, we are initiating a new column for the purpose of recognizing one of our many volunteers in each issue. The choice of which volunteer to honor will always be a difficult one because of the large number of men and women who give so freely of themselves for the benefit of the Society. However, no one is more deserving of being featured in our first column than Lillian Paull.

Lillian has volunteered her time and talents since spring 1976 when she was recruited to help with the library, and she has served as our dedicated librarian ever since. A teacher for many years, Lillian well knew the value of the printed word, especially as it applies to an historical society, and she used her knowledge and expertise to organize and set up our library system. This was no small task—when she arrived on the scene the library holdings were completely disorganized and scattered among several buildings. She set to with a will, often taking work home, painstakingly cataloging and indexing each item, and assuming responsibility for the photo files as well. The library now contains a growing variety of books, magazines, newspapers, maps, photos and scrapbooks, all methodically organized, thanks to Lillian. She continues to work two days each week (our only volunteer to arrive and depart by SEMTA bus), maintaining the library holdings, cataloging new materials, and assisting genealogical and historical researchers who visit frequently. In addition to this considerable work, she arranges special exhibits and helps out at events such as the Ice Cream Social and Victorian Christmas Open House. At 84 years of age, where does she find the energy?!

Lillian, we appreciate your help and your commitment these many years. Your work has been invaluable to the Society and we thank you.

Doll Raffle

"Angeolina," a porcelain doll, dressed by Helen Pickering, will be raffled off on December 16th. Tickets are \$1.00 each and if you are interested in buying or selling these tickets they may be picked up at the office.

Potpourri Shoppe

The Potpourri Shoppe, featuring many unusual gift items to help with your Christmas shopping, will be open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., until December 16th.

Christmas Festivities

Don't miss the festivities prepared for your pleasure in the One-Room School. Santa Claus will be there to greet boys and girls of all ages.

Victorian Christmas Open House

Once again the Wisner House buzzes with activity in preparation for the 17th annual Victorian Christmas Open House.

Chairpersons Susan Metzdorf and Kathy Daggy are busy formulating the final plans which will include Crafters demonstrating their skills, Musical Performances, the Mulling of Cider and another great Entertaining Program in the one-room School House directed by Margaret Ann Jackson.

A list of the activities for this festive affair is posted on the office kitchen door. Do stop in and sign up to help. Guides, servers, ticket takers, parking attendants,

decorators and un-decorators are all needed.

The Hanging of the Greens will take place on December 4th beginning at 9:00 a.m. Come and take part in this fun activity! Everyone is welcome. Coffee and donuts will be served.

With this Gazette you are being sent 4 tickets of admission. Your contribution will be gratefully accepted prior to the event, however, tickets may also be purchased at the door.

An insert is included for you to return in the envelope provided letting us know where you would like to help.

Annual Report of the President

As President, I set up new Standing Committees with the consent of those concerned and found that all chairpersons were willing and dedicated. This past year we have dealt with four major areas: a) to increase membership; b) publicity; c) exterior restoration of the schoolhouse; and d) exterior restoration of the Governor Moses Wisner House.

Under the able direction of our Membership Chairman, Marion Roush, a drive was conducted and our membership now stands at 673. Later this fall, the committee will meet again to plan another membership drive.

The Publicity Chairman, Clark Kimball has done a great job publicizing the OCP&HS. We have had more local newspaper coverage than ever. The Schoolhouse, through a donation of \$500.00 from the Pontiac Civitan Club was scraped and painted by many volunteers who spent numerous hours on the project.

The need for exterior restoration of the Wisner House has been evident for many years. Through the untiring efforts of Gretchen Adler we have been awarded adequate funds to complete this work. We have hired Architect Bruce Smith who has made preliminary plans for the restoration. Bids have been received. Restoration is well under way. The bid was awarded to The Family Building Company, under the direction of Mr. Earl Britton.

This year we also had to replace our Administrative Coordinator. There were sixteen applicants for the job. We interviewed only three of them. Fortunately, we were able to hire the very capable, well-qualified Georgene Sloan who is doing an excellent job for our Society by working well with all of our volunteers and local agencies.

Our Ice Cream Social and Crafts Program were successful due to the large number of people that attended. Thanks are in order to Jane Kamlay, our chairperson and her committee. All worked

hard and long hours to make it a success.

Our Victorian Christmas Open House was a great success thanks to Susan Metzdorf and Kathryn Daggy, Co-chairmen. The entertainment by the Jills from Bloomfield Andover High School was the highlight of the day. All seemed to enjoy them.

In May, our 111th Annual Dinner at the Main Event was attended by 135 of our members who thoroughly enjoyed the Meadowbrook Theatre Trunk Showing of Period costumes dating from the days of the Greeks through modern times. Our appreciation of this enjoyable evening is extended to Rosamond Haeberle and her Committee.

Another project that was completed this year was obtaining legal opinions from a copyright attorney as to the publication rights of the Avery papers which we hold. This publication has been completed by the Farmington Hills Historical Society under the direction of Mrs. Jean Fox and Dr. John Cameron, both members of OCP&HS. Our Society has been given credit for the rights of this publication and the soft and hard covered books are now available for purchase.

During the past year the project to restore the oil paintings has been completed by the Detroit Institute of Arts. We gratefully acknowledge the various agencies responsible for funding this project: The Pontiac Art Center, City of Pontiac, National Endowment for the Arts for City Arts Grants with a match from the Michigan State Appropriated Museum Matching Funds for Outreach Conservatory Projects.

The Institute of Museum Services granted the OCP&HS \$1,000.00 to begin preliminary work on accreditation of the Governor Moses Wisner House Museum. This project is currently underway for an evaluator has been designated for it.

The year has been a most interesting and enjoyable one for me

Donald H. Daggy, President

The Pickering Family

Centennial Farm

Down Through the Years 1879-1985

as Recalled by
Helen Brodie Pickering

Five generations of Pickerings and one hundred and six years have gone by since Cooper Pickering bought the land in 1879. It was designated a Centennial Farm in 1979, and is one of the few left in Oakland County still considered to be a working farm.

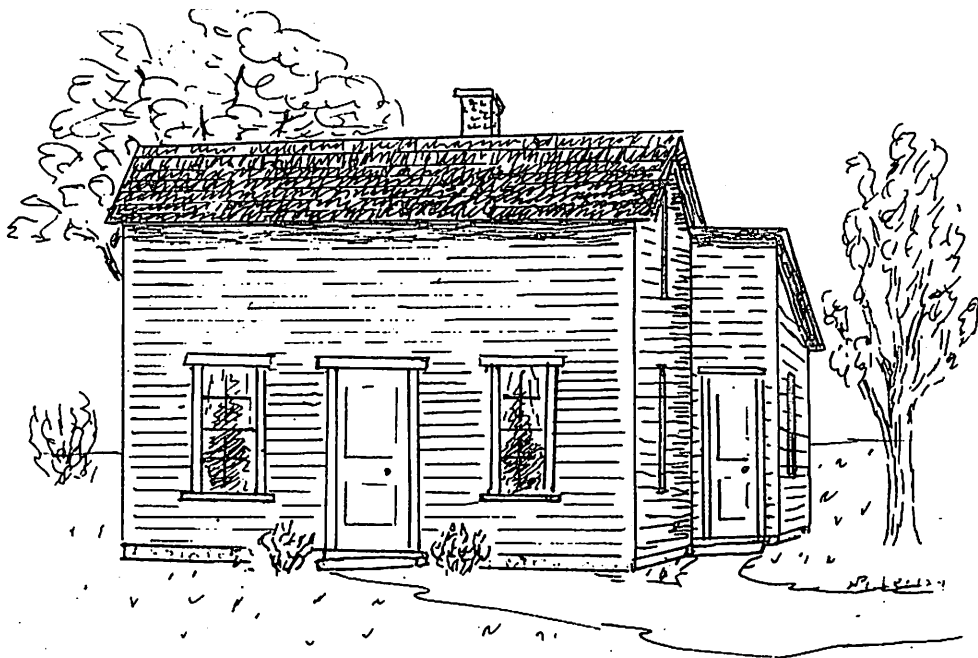
Cooper Pickering was born in the little village of Friskney, on the East coast of the North Sea, in Lincolnshire, England, on March 12, 1828. His wife, Eliza Turner Pickering, was also born in Friskney, one year later, March 4, 1829. Shortly after they were married in 1850, they left their native homeland and families to make a new life together in America.

In the mid-Nineteenth Century, Friskney, Lincolnshire, first settled by the Romans, and later taken by William, the Conqueror, offered few opportunities for a young man to acquire land or obtain much economic security. The English newspapers and magazines, at that time, however, were printing glowing reports of chances to achieve that good life in the United States. In the still sparsely populated areas of Oakland County, Michigan, it was said, fertile land, and lots of it, produced bountiful crops of grains and fruits, with water and woodlands in abundance. And it could be purchased for about \$1.25 an acre.

Other Pickering family members and their friends from the Friskney area were coming to this land of opportunity, so 22 year old Cooper and Eliza, 21, full of youthful energy, ambition and hope, came with them.

Arriving in America, they came directly to Oakland County, and settled on land in the Southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5, Southfield Township, near the small community of Franklin, where other English families had settled. Their farm home was on 13 Mile and Franklin Road.

Cooper planted his land of more than 150 acres to grains and general farm crops. Here, he and Eliza raised their family and lived their entire life, confident that their decision to come to America had been a wise one. They had prospered and achieved the financial security they sought when leaving England. And they were able to buy land.



Ink Drawing of the first little frame salt-box house already on the property when Cooper Pickering bought it in

In 1879, a son, George Henry Pickering, was grown and ready to start farming for himself. Just to the north of Cooper's land, at Franklin and 14 Mile Road, a large piece of good farm land was for sale. Cooper bought it and turned it over to George to begin farming on. This land, in the Southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 31, Bloomfield Township, is now the Pickering Centennial Farm.

The following year, in 1880, George Henry Pickering, married a neighbor girl, Lottie Forman, the daughter of William and Harriet Forman. They had come from Friskney, Lincolnshire, England, about the same time as the Pickerings, but first went to Ohio. Coming to Bloomfield Township in 1853, they settled a little north of the Pickering lands. These two families were again joined by marriage, when Cooper and Eliza's daughter, Jennie, married Samuel Gaylor Forman, the son of William and Harriet. They became the second generation to live on the Forman lands. Today, a part of that land is still occupied by their descendant, Gaylor Forman.

George Henry and Lottie Pickering first lived in a small, frame salt-box house that was already on the property. There, twin daughters, Elsie and Edna, were born. In 1888, the little house was moved back a short distance and a large new farmhouse was built over the old foundation. George was also a prosperous farmer, so having a larger home was a matter of pride and an improvement to the property. It also became a necessity, for later that same year a son, Ralph, was born, and in 1890, another son, Russell.

Eliza died, when 59 years old in 1888 and Cooper, six years later, at age 66, in

1879. Drawn by Helen Brodie Pickering.

1894. They are buried in the Franklin Village Cemetery, as are their children and many other members of the Pickering family.

In the early 1900's while George was working the farm, and his sons, Ralph and Russell, were growing up, most of the acreage was planted to general farming crops. He did raise a large herd of milch cows that supplied the village of Franklin with milk, selling it to the Franklin Village General Store, run by his son-in-law John Curran.

He planted an orchard with peach and apple trees, first a peach, then an apple. The peaches ripened and were ready to harvest first, and then the apples. This was the small beginning of the Pickering Orchard business.

One late summer day in the 1920's, during the peach season, Helen Brodie, who had grown up on the east side of Square Lake Road, near what is now Telegraph, was sent by her mother to the Pickering orchards to buy some peaches. When she started her car to go home the engine had a terrible knock. She didn't know what caused it, so went back to the barn and asked Russell if he knew what the trouble might be. He didn't, and she drove the noisy car home. Russell did think she was a very special kind of peach though and began to spend much time cultivating her attention. On June 2, 1925 they were married. Helen then moved to the Pickering Farm home, and has been living there ever since. The Brodie's and her mother's family, the Benedicts, were early settlers in the northern part of Bloomfield Township.

By the 1930's, the Pickering farm land, under the care of Russell and Helen, was



Helen Brodie Pickering beside a painting of the Pickering Centennial Farm Home and Barn.

no longer producing any general farm crops. Franklin Village had grown and needed more milk than they could supply, so the cows were sold, the grain crops no longer needed and the fields were planted to fruit trees. Soon they were specializing only in the production of apples.

They had many varieties. The harvest began in early August and lasted through October, or until the frost came. According to Helen, the very best applesauce was made from the August Transparencies.

The fruit was sold on the Eastern Market in Detroit. Every Saturday and sometimes oftener, at the peak of the season, their truck was loaded and ready to leave home for market by 3:00 A.M. They always rented the same corner stall. It was a most difficult one to get into, but was in a particularly advantageous selling spot. By the time market closed at 12:00 Noon they were sold out and headed back home. On a recent visit to Eastern Market Helen went by their old stall. What memories it brought of those busy days. That corner stall was still doing a brisk business.

Each year as more orchards matured, the business grew. To maintain the A-1 quality of the apples that the Pickering Orchards were becoming well known for, the farm barn became the center of operations for the business. The old barn had been on the property when Cooper Pickering bought the property back in 1879. To preserve and store the apples, the lower level was now insulated and a refrigerator storage unit installed. An elevator brought the apples up to the first floor salesroom. A second hand cider press and a doughnut machine were bought and cider and doughnuts were sold along with the apples.

The need for lots of workers was a necessity, but help was never difficult to get. During the depression years in the

1930's most came from the local area. As the economy improved and the local help found other permanent jobs, other workers had to be found.

This part of Oakland County has always had lands favorable for fruit growing, and there were numerous other orchard growers in the area who also needed workers. One of those was Leo Deconick, whose orchard was on Orchard Lake Road. He was instrumental in organizing the South-eastern Michigan Apple Growers Association. This organization negotiated with government authorities to bring in workers from Jamaica. Russell and Helen would have three of these men who came for the picking season. "They were the best workers you ever saw," says Helen. "Even at 7:00 o'clock at night they would come in from the orchards with a crate on each shoulder, still going strong."

Bunkhouses were built for them and supplied with bedding, stoves and cooking utensils, but they did their own cooking. Sometimes Helen did some shopping for them. Once they asked her to get them some biscuits. She brought back some nice soft rolls, but they looked very puzzled and asked what to do with them. As Englishmen, their biscuits were crisp, hard crackers. They were dreadfully afraid of snakes and if any of them saw one in the orchard they came flying up to the house full speed, ready to go back to Jamaica right away. They weren't going to stay where there were snakes!

In the summer and then on weekends the barn and salesroom workers were mostly high school friends of the Pickering's two children, George and Margaret. They graded and packed the apples, ran the cider press and doughnut machine and sold at the counters. For these workers, every Sunday Helen cooked them a big dinner, with fried chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables and, of course, apple pie. It was a

time for them to relax for awhile and have a little fun along with the busy work day.

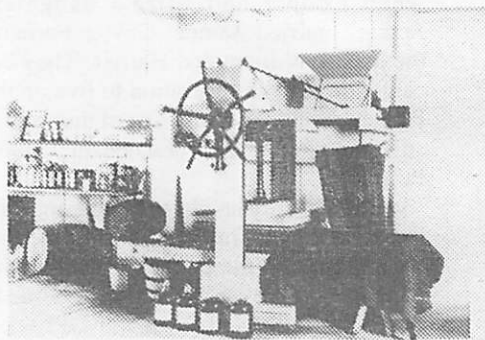
By the 1960's the government had made new regulations, and decided they could no longer bring in the Jamaicans, but had to use American help. Workers were then brought up from the Southern States, but they weren't used to the hard work, long hours, and were often sick. The work could no longer be done as efficiently as before.

At the end of the 1964 harvest, Russell closed the barn door and decided that after nearly 40 years in the apple business it was time for the farm land and the family to have a rest. They no longer cultivated the trees or sprayed the fruit. From then on, he and Helen decided to just have fun, and for the next ten years they did, until Russell's death in 1975. They traveled all over the United States, to Florida, to California and Canada. "Every trip was a great one," says Helen.

When the Pickering Farm Orchards went out of business, it was also the end of an era, the end of one kind of land use and the beginning of another. Most of the surrounding farm families had already sold off their lands for subdivision development, and a part of the Pickering land was also put to that use.

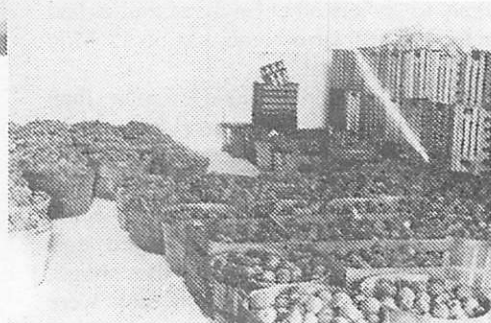
Today a part of it is producing a new farm crop, much in demand by the present generation. By harvesting the woodland for firewood, Cooper Pickering's great-grandson, David Pickering, is the 5th generation to carry on the family tradition of maintaining a working productive farm.

Helen Brodie Pickering has been a member of The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society since 1969, a member of the Board of Directors, is a painter and photographer, and has a devoted interest in carrying on the history of all branches of her families.



Barn salesroom with bushels and bushels of apples.

Barn salesroom showing cider press.





Marguerite Parrott and Faye Donelson

Report of Annual Meeting

The 111th Annual Meeting of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society was held on Wednesday evening, September 18, 1985, in the Carriage House at Pine Grove.

Written reports of the committees were distributed and those of the officers were read.

The following new members were elected to the Board of Directors:

For three-year term ending 1988; Rex Lamoreaux.

To fill a vacancy, term ending 1987; Lenna McIntyre, Robert Stogdill.

To fill a vacancy, term ending 1986; Jack Moore.

Officers for 1985-1986: President - Donald H. Daggy; Vice-President - Clarke Kimball; Secretary - Marion Roush; Treasurer - Kathryn Daggy.

Marguerite Parrott was given a pewter Pine Grove plate by Faye Donelson for the person having lived in Oakland County the longest who signed the Old Timers Guest Register at the Ice Cream Social. Mrs. Parrott has lived her entire 87 years in Oakland County.

Refreshments and a social hour followed the business meeting.

New Historic Sites in Oakland County

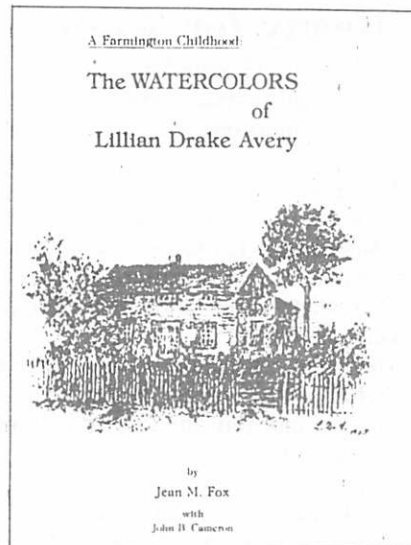
National Register of Historic Places

Grand Trunk Western Railroad Birmingham Depot,
245 S. Eton Street, Birmingham,
Michigan

State Register of Historic Places

Holly Town Hall, Holly, Michigan

The Memoirs of Lillian Drake Avery



The sole purpose for founding the Oakland County Pioneer Society in 1874 was to collect and publish the life experiences of the earlier County residents.

Our founding members, one of whom

Calendar of Coming Events

November 20 - 9:30 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting

December 4 - 9:00 a.m. Hanging of the Greens

December 8 - 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m. Victorian Christmas Open House

December 5, 6, 9-13 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Holiday Week Tours - By Appointment

December 16 - 9:00 a.m. De-hanging of the Greens — Doll Raffle

December 17 - February 1, 1986 Office Closed

January 15, 1986 - 9:30 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting

February 19, 1986 - 9:30 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting

A History of Family Farming in Michigan

The Michigan Centennial Farms Association, to celebrate Michigan's Sesquicentennial, is compiling a book presenting a history of family farming in Michigan. They are still seeking additional farms that qualify as Centennial Farms by being owned by a descendant of those who owned it 100 years ago.

Anyone who is interested may send inquiries to the Michigan Centennial Farm Association, c/o Ferguson Communications, Publishers, P.O. Box 146, Hillsdale, Michigan 49242.

Centennial Farm pictures and stories will be accepted until January 1, 1986.

was Thomas Drake, an ancestor of Lillian Drake Avery, were very diligent in carrying on this work. They wisely realized that the written word was the best way to preserve and keep alive our County's history, and it still is today.

Our present day Society has been very neglectful in publishing any of the vast historical materials stored in our library's archives.

It is now with pride, and a sense of again fulfilling our commitment to our purpose, that we recently made available to the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, for publication, the unpublished manuscript and watercolors of Lillian Drake Avery, that has been in our possession for nearly 20 years.

This beautiful new book of her memoirs of life in 19th Century Oakland County is now available in both hard back and paper covers. The water color prints are also available. They may be purchased from either the Oakland County Pioneer Society or the Farmington Hills Historical Commission.

New Members Welcomed

We welcome the following new members. Their interest in the work of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society and its activities is deeply appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS

The Francis Cole Family
Mrs. Charlotte England
Mrs. Marie June
The William Knowlton Family
Mr. Alexander Riker
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sloan
Miss Ruth E. Wall

NEW HONORARY JUNIOR MEMBERS

Mr. John Brinson
Miss Fannie Eaton
Miss Elizabeth Jones
Mr. Quinten Ross, Jr.
Miss Mary Steele
Miss Nancy Steele
Miss Pamela Williams

IN MEMORIAM

We regret to report the loss of the following members.

Mr. Lewis Arscott
Mrs. Joy V. Mitchell
Mr. Stanley Saunders
Mrs. Arvenia Treece
Mr. Murlin Vaughn
Mrs. John Windiate

YESTERYEARS—"Memory like the ivy, clings to olden times and ways and things."

Happy New Year

We wish a Happy New Year to all,
Who live in Michigan
The high, the low, the great and small,
Each friend and worthy man.

May peace and plenty, here abound,
In this our happy land,
And love and union here be found
In this our Michigan

May bitterness and angry strife,
Be driven from our land,
And all enjoy the bliss of life,
Within our Michigan.

May all progress and wiser grow,
And wisdom understand,
And truth and kindness each one know
In this our Michigan

May each one work for others good
And every wrong withstand,
And give the hungry of our food,
The poor of Michigan.

December 28, 1874 John Southard

John Southard was one of the founding members of the Oakland County Pioneer Society and often expressed his thoughts and feelings in original verse.

Celebrations

100 Years Old 1885 - 1985

S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, the only Polish seminary in the United States. The seminary was founded in Detroit in 1885, and in 1909 moved to Orchard Lake, purchasing the grounds of the Michigan Military Academy.

50 Years Old 1935 - 1985

Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, houses the Michigan Historical Collections, and has the most comprehensive collection of official and personal records of Michigan History and state and local government. It has the personal papers and memorabilia of 27 of Michigan's 44 former governors, as well as numerous private citizens of Michigan.

Wanted - A Log Cabin

Don Hollum, at the Bloomfield Hills Schools, is interested in locating a log cabin in Oakland County to be used for a teaching facility. Contact him at 540-5291.

Annual Giving Time

A tax-deductible gift to the Endowment, Memorial or Library Fund will be of great help in continuing the work of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

Getting the House Ready for Winter

The Pontiac Gazette for November 26, 1875 gave this advice to their readers living in the country on preparing their homes for winter.

When winter comes it is hard enough to keep warm in a country house, so better that some of the fall harvest be neglected, than have the family suffer injurious influences that will destroy their comfort and affect their health.

The cellar especially should receive attention. Located beneath the family living rooms, the moisture and foul air in it may rise through the doors and crevices in the floor greatly harming the family's health. It should have a ventilator leading to the chimney or run up between the walls through an opening in the cellar wall. Some means must be found for the constantly accumulating moisture and bad air to escape.

All rubbish and any matter liable to decay should be thrown out. Crates and barrels should be elevated on blocks of wood to keep them off the moist dirt and the walls and ceilings then receive a fresh coat of lime whitewash.

To keep the cellar from freezing, double doors and windows can be installed or the outside of single doors and windows filled with straw to keep out the cold.

Cracks around doors and windows in the house can be sealed effectively by the strips that are now in general use in townhouses, or strips of cloth stuffed into the cracks can also be helpful.

If rooms are carpeted there will be great savings in the consumption of fuel, and if papers are placed under the floor covering even more so. Wallpaper stops cracks in the plastering and adds to the comfort as well as the beauty of a room.

Snow and mud brought into a country house is unavoidably large and every means should be used to reduce it. Scrapers should be placed at the doors for cleaning the feet.

It is strange that so few country houses have walks from outer doors to the woodhouse and outbuildings. They can be made of two-inch planks fastened to scantlings and easily kept clear of snow as the surface is a good distance off the ground. In a single season the expense of making them would be saved while adding more to the comfort of the family than any other amount of money spent. They are a cheap luxury and no family having them for one winter would think of parting with them. To have them ready before fall rains fill the dooryard with mud, they should be made at once.

To the Editor

Dear Editor:

Your interesting article on the Michigan State Fair didn't say where the fairgrounds in Pontiac was. I have heard older relatives say it was out W. Huron St., and I have read that it was on N. Saginaw at Fairgrove. Can you help?

Sincerely,
Kathleen Thebo
A Member

The fairgrounds was located on West Huron Street at Thorpe Street. The Pontiac and Sylvan Lake Street Railway line ran out from downtown Pontiac past the Huron Street entrance to the grounds.

Editor, Oakland Gazette

Re: Figures on top of Pontiac State Bank
July, 1985 Issue

Letter sent in by Mike Kamlay

Lighted figures on top of the Pontiac Bank Building are Indian images which have a look similar to Egyptian carvings. There are also some large eagle images on the building

Charlene Williams, President
PSB Building Corp.
28 N. Saginaw St.
Pontiac, MI



Figures on top of the Pontiac State Bank
Courtesy of the Oakland Press

Dear Mike:

The people at the Pontiac State Bank and the Oakland Press have been able to answer your question. A big Thank You to them for their help and concern.