

ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

At Gov. Moses Wisner Historic House
405 Oakland Ave., Pontiac, Michigan
Sunday, August 3, 1986

1:00-5:00 p.m.

PLEASE RETURN THE
ENCLOSED MEMBER
RESPONSE SHEET!!!



PARKING

Wisner School Lot Adjoining Wisner House
Oakland Ave. Evangelical Presbyterian Church Lot
On East Side of Oakland Ave.

REFRESHMENTS — Ice Cream, Cake and Beverage with each admission ticket
— Hot Dogs - for Sale!!!

ENTERTAINMENT — Sweet Adelines 2 p.m. & 3 p.m. - Side Veranda
— Victorian Music Box - Parlor

DOLL RAFFLE — Tickets \$1.00 Drawing at 3 p.m.

This beautiful porcelain baby doll to be raffled off during the Ice Cream Social was made by Helen Pickering. Each year Helen volunteers her fine sewing ability and time to make and dress a doll for this money-making project. This is just one of the many ways our members contribute to the work of our Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

17th ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

AUGUST 3, 1986

405 OAKLAND AVENUE
PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Donation: Adults \$3.00

Children under 12, \$1.00

VISIT:

— The Wisner Historic House
— 1840s - Governor Moses Wisner's Home - Original historic furnishings and restored paintings.

— Drayton Plains Schoolhouse
— New Lamps - Donated in Memory of Leland and Mary Forman.
— The Perry Glass collection of Indian Artifacts

— Carriage House
— Display Cases & Old Fashion Court Office.
— Museum of Farm Equipment and Tools on Lower Level.

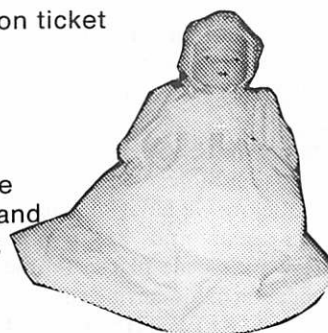
— Summer Kitchen
— Restored and Fully Equipped

— Grounds
— Flower gardens, Herb garden, Smokehouse, Privy, Cyclone & Root Cellar

— Potpourri Shoppe
— A wide variety of historical reproductions and hand-made crafts.

— Old Timers Reception
— Sign-in at the Carriage House

— Book Sale
— Proceeds go to the Library Fund

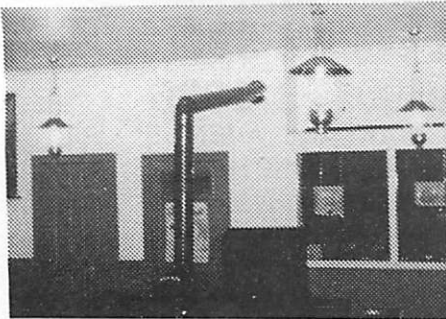


Coming Events

- July 20** Sunday Walk-In tour, 1:00 and 2:30 p.m.
Aug. 3 Annual Ice Cream Social, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Aug. 17 Sunday Walk-In Tour, 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.
Aug. 20 Board of Directors meeting, Carriage House, 9:30 a.m.
Sept. 17 Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society Annual Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Carriage House

Walk-In Tours - During July and August, Tuesday-Friday, 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

New Hanging Lamps in Schoolhouse



Our Drayton Plains one-room schoolhouse has recently taken on a new-old look, just as it might have been when first built back in the 1860s.

Seven polished brass kerosene hanging lamps, which have been electrified, have been installed to replace the functional white-globed ceiling lights.

The acquisition of these lovely new lamps was made possible by donations to the Society in memory of Leland and Mary Forman, whose ancestors first settled in Bloomfield Township in 1853.



Sesquicentennial Project

Our Sesquicentennial Project is off to a good start. Since the project began last April, we have reached over 10% of our goal.

Many more \$5.00 Carriage House Foundation Stones must be bought, however, before we have enough to complete the project and begin getting the stonework facade placed on the concrete foundation of the carriage house.

LET'S KEEP THE \$5.00s COMING

Pontiac 125 Years Old

Along with the Fourth of July celebrations, the City of Pontiac was celebrating its 125th anniversary, with pancake breakfasts, parades, concerts, fireworks and a variety of other festivities.

On Thursday, July 3rd, the Michigan Bell Telephone Company, at Huron and Mill Streets, opened a time capsule that had been placed in the cornerstone of the building in 1928.

Among the numerous items stored in the capsule 58 years ago were a 1928 telephone directory, telephone company annual reports, Pontiac Boy Scouts roster, American flag and a 1928 edition of the Pontiac Daily Press, now the Oakland Press.

After the contents of the capsule were examined they were accepted by our President, Donald Daggy, and will now become a permanent Collection of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. During the month of July the items found in the capsule will be on display at the Michigan Bell Telephone Company building. They will then be on exhibit at the Wisner Historic House for the Ice Cream Social and during the month of August.

Troy Settlers Celebrate Nation's 50th Birthday

Although greatly isolated from events of the rest of the country, the early pioneers who had recently settled in Troy were determined to express their loyalty as United States citizens and celebrate the Nation's 50th birthday, using such resources as were available. The events of the day were later recalled in the **History of Oakland County 1817-1877**.

Meeting at the home of William Poppleton of Troy on the Fourth of July, 1826 and bringing with them such firearms as they could gather up, Alva Butler, Ira Jennings, Orrin Srague, Ira Toms, Jesse Perrin, and others, began the day's events with a general fuselage, the object of which was to see how much noise their guns would make. One of the members was then appointed to read the Declaration of Independence and Washington's Farewell address to which they "listened with rapt attention." Dinner, served by Mrs. Poppleton and the other neighbor women, consisted of pork and beans, bread and pumpkin pie. After much visiting and a general reunion another fuselage was fired off, followed by a game of baseball. At the day's end, they declared the celebration a success.

Indian Artifacts On Display

Indian Artifacts from two different collections are now on display in the schoolhouse. The Perry Glass Indian Collection consists of 91 separate spear

points, arrowheads and tools. These artifacts date from the time of the Paleo-Indian and Archaic culture. Some are drills used by the Indians in making leather clothing, and scraping tools for preparing the hides. Others are stone points bound to throwing spears for hunting the mastodons and other large animals that at one time roamed this local area.

These artifacts were collected by Perry Glass, while a young boy, in the backyard of his family's home, along the bank of the Clinton River in Pontiac.

Also on exhibit is a framed collection of 218 Indian Artifacts formerly belonging to William Cummings and found on his farm around Orchard Lake and Upper Straits Lake. This collection consists of projectile points, knives, drills, scrapers and a number of ornamental objects. According to Charles Martinez, a member of the Michigan Archaeological Society and a Board member of our Society, most of these objects date from between 6,000 B.C. and 600 B.C., the Middle and Late Archaic period.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr. Virgil P. Bernero
 Mr. Larry Blackett
 Mrs. Grace G. Carafelly
 Mr. Bruce D. Hassen
 Mr. and Mrs. William Laakko

IN MEMORIAM

We regret to report the death of the following members.

Mr. J. Earl Crawford
 Mr. Gene Wellman
 Mr. I. O. Wideman

Civitan Club Gift Will Restore Schoolhouse Floor

The Society has received a gift of \$500.00 from the Civitan Club of Pontiac, designated for the restoration of the schoolhouse floor.

Ever since the society acquired the Drayton Plains schoolhouse in 1965 the floor has been in need of refinishing. The old paint will now be removed, and replaced with an oil finish, such as was put on floors of the early one-room schools.

This generous donation is the second one given by the Civitan Club for help in the preservation of the schoolhouse. Last year, along with a donation, their Junior members also gave a day of volunteer time and labor to painting the exterior of the schoolhouse.

We are deeply grateful for the interest and support that the members of this club have given us to maintain this educational facility for teaching early Oakland County history.

The Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church

The Covenanter Church

On Evergreen Road, just off Eleven Mile Road, in the City of Southfield, stands a small white frame church with green shutters. Beside it in the churchyard is a little old country cemetery -- God's half acre. The Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church, or Covenanter Church, as it is commonly called, is one of two of the original churches in America, and the first of its kind in Michigan.

The Covenanter Church has been called the strictest and one of the most historic in America. It embraces in its teachings the principles of the second reformation or covenant of Scotland, a true representative of the Church of Scotland in her purist days. The form of worship is simple and direct, with the supremacy of God and Christ, the King, acknowledged supreme, both in heaven and earth. The 150 Psalms are the only songs used in the worship and are sung without instrumental accompaniment.

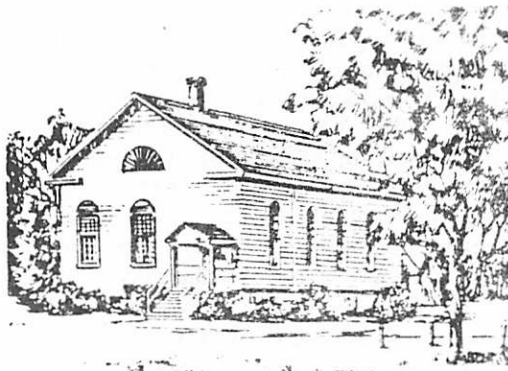
In the fall of 1831, before Michigan had become a State, when little of the virgin forest of Oakland County had yet felt the woodman's axe, David Stewart came from Orange County, New York and settled on land in Southfield Township. He also took up land for his son-in-law, John Parks, who came on from New York City with his family and that of David Stewart the following year, in May, 1832.

David Stewart, already past sixty-five years old, and a Covenanter, found that one of his new neighbors, William Connery, was also of Covenanter origin. Through their efforts other Covenanters, and relatives from Orange County, N.Y. and the East settled in the vicinity, including the McClellands, Lowes, McKinnies, McClungs, Harmons and Erwins.

By 1834 there were a sufficient number of Covenanters in the Southfield area to organize a Church. Previous to this time and continuing for many years thereafter, the Covenanters were led by David Stewart in prayer meetings of "the Society", an organizational feature of the early Reformed Presbyterian Church. In an era when it was difficult for members of the congregation to travel to services, a "Society" would be organized for members living within a certain locality for mid-week prayer meetings and reciting of the Catechism.

In her reminiscences of the early days of that church, Miss Mary Thompson, a great grand-daughter of David Stewart told of finding a yellowed slip of paper in one of his books, and in his own handwriting, the "Society's" topic for discussion, taken from James 4:14, "For what is your life? How we ought we to improve life so as to be ready for death?"

There were Covenanters living in West



Bloomfield Township and also at "The Flint" (Lapeer). In the summer a supply minister would ride the Circuit from Ohio to The Flint, and stop at the Stewart home on Saturday night. David would then shoulder his gun and follow the trail to John Parks to tell him there would be preaching in his barn the next day. Then back home he went to tell all his neighbors, for church was also a social event. Parks then went to give the news to his neighbors. They came from far and near behind their ox teams, over the stumpy trails to hear "a real sermon" and greet their friends.

At these old barn meetings, the ladies, decked out in their best finery, were seated on rough slab benches, while the men and boys, in homespun, reclined in the hay mow. According to a note in David Stewart's book, on July 11, 1836, the minister, John Wallace, delivered a rousing Covenanter sermon from Psalms 119:106. John McClelland then "lined the psalm", as singing filled the barn rafters. A solemn hush fell over all when the benediction was pronounced, after which the reverent congregation quietly filed out, homeward bound, strengthened in mind and body, to face the hard toil of another week.

Sometime after 1834, John Parks gave one acre of his farm land for a church site. A small church was erected in 1838, amid the trees and stumps, but the congregation was without a pastor until the Rev. James Neill was installed in 1843. He remained until 1851. It has been noted that he suffered greatly from inflammatory rheumatism, "due to the exposure he was subjected to in the new country." The next pastor, Rev. J.S.T. Milligan's ministering's added so greatly to the membership that a resolution was passed by the congregation to build a new church. In December, 1859 pledges totaling \$1,753.00 had been received and a building committee contracted with Joseph Torrens to erect the new church on the original church site to be completed by December 1, 1861.

The construction of the church was typical of the buildings of the period. Today, in the church attic, one can still see the huge beams, hewn by a broad axe, the joists, purlins and rafters carefully fitted with mortise and tenon joints secured by wooden pins. What a contrast this 125 year old building presents to the 18 story office building across Evergreen Road.

With the completion of the church building, the congregation then met to determine the amount to be charged for the pew rental. Three seats at the front of the pulpit and three in front of the stove were to be free. The pastor and family had their choice of a pew without cost. All others were to be rented for not less than \$8.00 per year. However, the deacons were given the privilege of negotiating with the other adherents for a lesser rate. An auctioneer was appointed in the renting of the pews, so it appears that the ones paying the most rent for his pew would be given first choice. The deacons report for 1864 shows that all the pews were rented that year.

Yearly rental of pews negotiable.

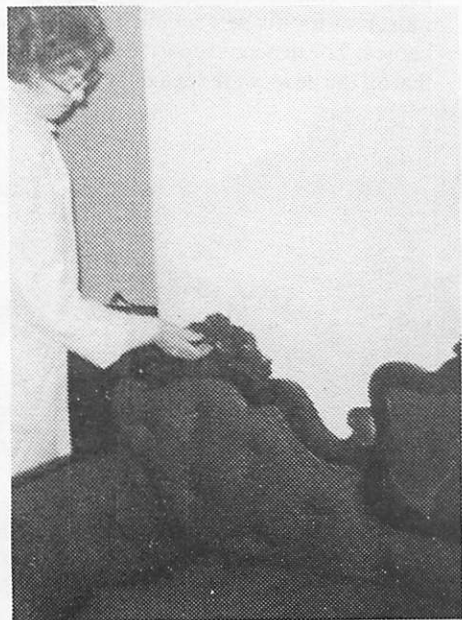


In the church minutes of January 15, 1863, a resolution was adopted cautioning "tobacco chewers not to spit in the pews or on the floor of the new church."

In the early years the Covenanter Church was concerned, not only with the spiritual life of its members, but with all other areas as well. At a meeting of the Session on October 7, 1850, a resolution was passed "that those persons having matters of a difference in the way of arbitration be required to use all diligence in settling their controversy and to report to the next meeting of the Session." Issues also included personal quarrels, horse trades and other business dealings. The most frequent causes for censure, however, were for failure to attend church services on the Lord's Day and not be present for the observance of the Lord's Supper.

One case for censure occurred when a man stood up in the church service and defiantly shouted at the minister, "I've had enough of that", and then when the collection basket was passed he seized it and threw it out of the church. For such conduct he was ordered to appear before the Session. He defended his action by explaining that it was his belief that it was sinful to take an offering on the Sabbath. The man was suspended from church privileges, but they were soon restored when he later decided it was proper to take the offering.

During the Civil War, men drafted in the Union Army were required to take the oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. This was a matter of serious concern for the Reformed Presbyterians, who refused to swear allegiance to the Constitution because it contained no acknowledgement of God or Jesus Christ. In



Clara Elsey, a member since childhood, points to sofa placed behind pulpit when church was built.

the Church Session Records of 1863 it was "Resolved: that the hiring of a substitute, mustered into the service by taking the oath of allegiance or the subscribing of money to hire substitutes, is contrary to the Church's principles, and that the Session cannot allow such acts to pass without due notice and the exercise of discipline to those who have done so." There are no records to indicate such action taken against any member, or of any men from the congregation serving in the army.

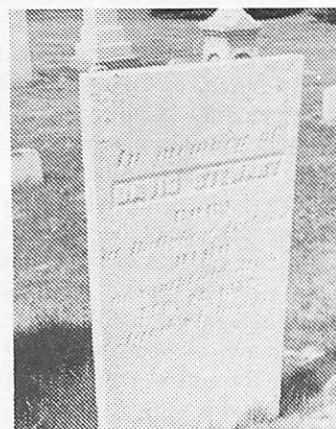
The church did have an interest in ministering to negroes who had escaped slavery. In 1864 the minister, J.S.T. Milligan, was granted a leave of absence to organize a mission among the Freed Men at Washington, D.C. Later, reports show special offerings were taken for the Freed Men Mission. There is no report of this congregation having engaged in the Underground Railroad movement. After the War, a negro man, named George Washington, who lived in Birmingham, attended the church regularly but never became a member.

The 1870s through the early 1900s appears to have been the most vibrant period for the church life of this small agricultural congregation. The 1950s, however, brought marked changes to both the congregation and to the surrounding area of Southfield Township itself.

Improved means of transportation that provided easy access to Detroit and other surrounding work areas resulted in much of the farm land being sold for subdivisions and also for commercial development. The growth of Southfield during the past quarter century has been phenomenal. These changes were especially significant for the Church too, for the farm from which the land for the church was originally given, was sold by a descendant of the Parks family, Mary Thompson, to the City of Southfield for the development of the Southfield Civic Center, housing the City Offices, the 46th District Court, Police Station, the David Stewart Memorial Library, and for Parks and Recreational facilities. Across the street from the Church, on Evergreen Road, now a four-lane highway, is the Traveler's Insurance Company Tower and nearby is Prudential Insurance Company's Town Center.

Yet, proudly standing on its original site, surrounded by all this late 20th Century glass and steel, is the little white framed Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church. Although the church membership hasn't kept pace with the changing community, due perhaps, in part, to its strict discipline which the church exercises over its members, the present congregation continues to carry on the principles of their faith as witnessed by their forefathers.

Churchyard Cemetery



When John Parks, donor of the church site, died suddenly January 24, 1838, at age 36, he was buried in the cemetery at the Presbyterian Church of Southfield, as the Reformed Presbyterian Church had none at that time. Shortly after his death, his wife, Margaret Stewart Parks, gave another half acre of land just to the north of the Covenanter Church for a cemetery. David Stewart was the first to be buried there when he died February 24, 1852. Today the old gravestones in the cemetery bear the names of most all of those early parishioners whose faith and labors preserved this historic place of worship for so many years.



Materials used in the writing of this article were taken from:

The Covenanter Church of Southfield And Its Early History, Related by Miss Mary E. Thompson, Published February 15, 1915, in *The Birmingham Eccentric*, Birmingham, Michigan.

Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1834-1973, as Compiled by Rev. John O. Edgar.

History of Oakland County, 1817-1877.