



## The 114th Annual Dinner is May 18



Dr. Weldon E. Petz

We're having dinner together again this year. And what a joy it will be. During the 114 years since the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society was founded in 1874, the Annual Dinner in early spring has been one of the delightful events of the year.

The Annual Dinner for 1988 will be on Wednesday, May 18th. This year we will dine in the Banquet Room of the Pike Street Restaurant in downtown Pontiac. Social Hour begins at 6 p.m., dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The informal program will be presided over by President Gretchen Adler.

The main attraction will be "A Pilgrimage with Abraham Lincoln," presented by Dr. Weldon E. Petz, a renowned Lincoln historian. Dr. Petz, a fourth generation native Detroit, has traveled widely in the United States, Canada, Central America and Europe as a scholar and speaker before some 1500 groups on the subject of Lincoln and the Civil War.

Dr. Petz has served on advisory boards with such fellow Lincoln authorities as Allan Nevins, Bruce Catton and Carl Sandburg. He has been a Lincolniana consultant for Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee, and Greenfield Village in Dearborn.

During "A Pilgrimage With Abraham Lincoln" at our Annual Dinner, Dr. Petz will use slides and artifacts from his vast collection of Lincolnabilia.

Dr. Petz, for many years a teacher and administrator in Detroit and Farmington public schools, is a longtime resident of West Bloomfield in Oakland County.

The Annual Dinner this year is the result of efforts by chairperson Rosamond Haerberle and committee members Gretchen Adler, Don and Kitty Daggy, Dick Jones, Clarke Kimball, Susan Metzendorf and Bob Reynnells. Reservations may be made by returning the enclosed form.

We look forward to seeing everyone there this year.

## West Bloomfield Library Celebrates Their 50th Anniversary

Congratulations to the West Bloomfield Library on its 50th Anniversary as a public institution.

The anniversary will be celebrated all day Saturday, April 23rd, with open houses at the Main Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Road, west of Orchard Lake Road and at the Westacres Branch, 7321 Commerce Road, west of Green Road in West Bloomfield.

Established as a public library in 1938, the idea was first a project of the Keego-Cass Lake Women's Club when a few members saw the need for a library to serve West Bloomfield, Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake and Sylvan Lake.

The women begged, borrowed and donated volumes and made them available at their Cass Lake Road clubhouse during the early 1930's until the demand exceeded their ability to serve these Oakland County communities.

This year, the West Bloomfield Main and branch libraries continue to expand with the area's growing population. All four municipalities help fund the libraries. A contract with Commerce Township also makes the Westacres branch available to those residents.



Keego-Cass Lake Women's Club  
Cass Lake Road, Circa 1930



# Mildred Gingell Pioneer Rural School Marm

Excerpts from Oral History Tape  
Collection  
by Connie Lektzian

Michigan was dotted with rural schools from the earliest pioneer days to just before World War II. The restless movement to find new and better farms closed schools in one place to have them open in another.

The rural school marm, struggling to educate students who had to spend as much time with farm chores as with books, was a peculiar product of this agricultural society. One of the teachers in the last days of country schools in Oakland County was Mildred Gingell.

She was born on November 27, 1908, in the small community of Eames Station to Walter George and Edith Andrews Gingell; the fourth generation of a pioneer family.

Eames Station was a small community where Silver Bell Road joins Joslyn consisting of a train station and country store. The Gingell farm (at Waldon Road and old Joslyn Rd.) had two main cash crops - grain and potatoes. The grain usually went to the Sawyer Mill in Pontiac for a better price than the local mills gave. Winter sales brought in more money, and Mr. Gingell peddled sacked potatoes in Pontiac, often from a bobsled. Turkeys were raised in the Orion area by the farm women. These birds were allowed to range in the woods. Each family dyed the wing feathers of their flocks to distinguish ownership. One of young Mildred's first jobs was to hunt out the nests of turkeys with green-dyed wing tips and report the locations back to her mother.

Mildred's first day of school was memorable as her mother carried her to school thru snow drifts higher than her head in February 1914. She recalls this first school,

"It was a one room school with four inch white knotty pine flooring-12 inch horizontal sliding half way up the walls. The rest was papered and desks nailed to the floor. A round Oak stove sat in the middle of the room. There was a bubbler drinking fountain and the boys had to get water from the nearest neighbor because the school well was condemned. There was a pail of water with a basin on a shelf to wash our hands. We had a pump organ, and the eighty books required for a school library."

The Gingell's took a great interest in their daughter's education, and when it came time to take the 8th grade exam, she was well prepared.



**GREEN SCHOOL**

Formerly on Green Rd. where it connects to Walnut Lake and Orchard Lake Roads.

"All rural school students were required to take an exam in order to graduate from the 8th grade. We had to go to the nearest high school - which for us was in Orion. The tests took the better part of two days - I believe it was on a Thursday and Friday. We were tested in mental arithmetic, written arithmetic, geography, grammar, civil government, U.S. history, reading, penmanship, physiology, agriculture and orthography. Some students were so frightened they failed these tests - and had to repeat the eighth grade."

She noticed no 'city' children writing the exam.

After graduating from high school at age sixteen, Mildred entered the Oakland County Normal in 1925 on only the recommendation of her high school teachers. Classes were held at Webster School on Huron Street in Pontiac. Amy Person taught the basic studies, Catherine Leak was the critic teacher, and Gertrude McVean the principal. Student teaching was done at Webster under strict observation.

The next stop for Mildred was at Sashabaw School where she was rated not only on her ability to teach but also in the way she prepared her lessons - and built the fire

in the stove! Her first real job was at the Oakwood School on Oakwood at North Baldwin Road. Here some 16 and 18 year old students were able to help with some of the heavier chores. Moving to Green School was an improvement. After all, that school had running water, real bathrooms and a coal stove.

Following twelve years of teaching in the one-room rural schools, with some diversion as she continued her own education, she graduated from Michigan Normal, now Eastern Michigan University, August, 1945. She was assigned to Longfellow School in Pontiac, teaching there for 27 years until she retired in 1972.

The 41 years spent in front of a classroom spanned many changes. Gone were the \$50 pay checks, along with fire building and lamp cleaning. But gone also for Mildred, was the satisfaction of a closer student-teacher relationship that was present in the one room school. Gone too was the sheer fun of watching individuals develop intellectually over a period of several years, sometimes from first grade until that final eighth grade test.

Mildred has enjoyed her retirement years and continues to reside in the Lake Orion area. We do appreciate her contribution to the Society's Oral History Collection.

## Summer Educational Presentation



### NATURAL CANE CLASS



Starting Thursday, June 2, 1988  
Carriage House 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon

Instructor:	Jack Moore has offered to teach a cane class to those who wish to learn how to do chair seats and backs.
Fee:	\$35.00 donation to Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society for five classes.
Materials:	Jack Moore will assist in obtaining the natural cane desired by class participants at minimum cost.
Class Size:	5 minimum - 12 maximum.
Contact:	Please contact Jack Moore 682-3188 or Dick Jones at the Office 338-6732 for further details.
Thursday Class Dates:	June 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and July 14th.



## Today - Our School in the Pines

The Governor Moses Wisner Historic House has many features that, indeed, entice and lure visitors from afar and even beyond the boundaries of Oakland County. But one particular pride and joy of the Oakland County Pioneer Historical Society is our one-room Drayton Plains Schoolhouse. Built in the 1860's, it was continuously used as an 'all-grade' school until 1921 and subsequently was owned by the Salvation Army and then a church where it was once again used as a schoolhouse for children on Sunday mornings.

It was donated to the Society in 1965 by Mr. Leonard Coats of Drayton Plains and moved from Sashabaw Road to Dixie to "Pine Grove". Situated amongst three original Wisner Pine trees on the southeast corner of the property, it stirs the imagination of all who see it, from toddlers to seniors. The school has been restored to the late 1800's era and is a favorite of children touring Pine Grove. In 1976, thanks to the efforts of the Waterford-Drayton Plains Rotary and Margaret Jackson, a new belfry was installed, patterned after the original. And inside that belfry today is a bell donated by another Society member, Fred Crossman. The beautiful reproduced 19th century oil lamps were donated by Gaylor Forman and are adjusted for electricity. We're fortunate to have this classic schoolhouse as one of our tourist attractions, a building wherein children learned in an atmosphere of coziness and togetherness, albeit often with a birch rod.

Linda Fuchs brought 14 students, grades 1 thru 8 from the Seventh Day Adventist Elementary School of Farmington Hills on March 15th for a day in the classroom. Dressed in typical dress of the 1860's they enjoyed exploring the McGuffey Readers as she conducted the classes. They came well prepared for their studies and also brought their sack lunches from home. Later they enjoyed a tour of "Pine Grove". The Society enjoys having the opportunity to present such an experience to the children of today.

### ACCESSIONS

Our thank you to the following members and organization who have donated special items to the Society collections.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Gen. Richardson,<br>Chapter DAR                     | Bound transcript of<br>First Congregational<br>Church of Pontiac<br>records 1832-1893                            |
| L. Paull, S.<br>Metzdorf,<br>G. Adler,<br>P. Gaytan | Linen tablecloth<br>68x102 with center<br>insert and 5" border of<br>handmade lace.                              |
| B. Jacobsen   | Wood tub washing<br>machine on stand with<br>wringer. Patent date<br>1904 by 1900 Washer<br>Co. Binghamton, N.Y. |
| B. Jacobsen   | Wood barrel butter<br>churn on stand. Mft. J.<br>McDermaid, Rockford,<br>Illinois                                |
| B. Poole  | Blue wicker doll buggy   |

### First Anniversary!

Congratulations to Dick Jones, whose first anniversary as executive secretary of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society is May 4th. Congratulations are also due the Society for its good fortune in having Dick as administrator.

### New Sunday Tour Date

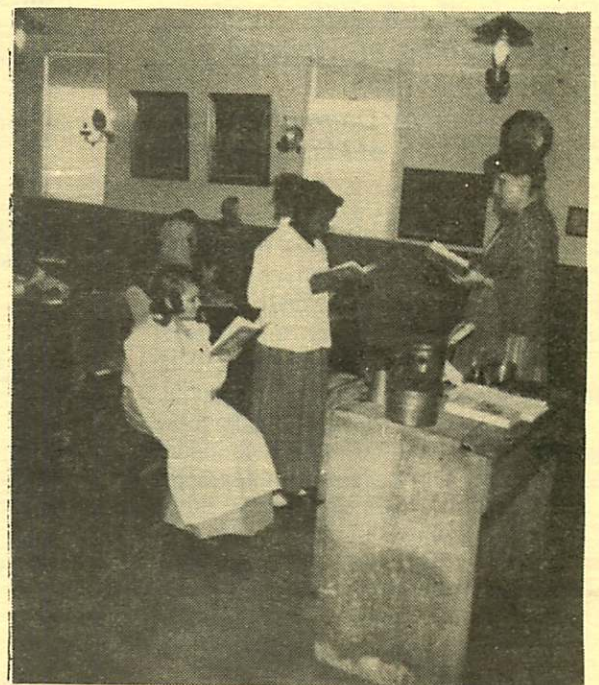
New date for Sunday walk-in tours starts June 5th. They will now be the first Sunday of each month. Additional tours can be arranged with Dick Jones. Phone (313) 338-6732. Office hours: Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



RECESS



READING 'RITING 'RITHMETIC



RECITATION with teacher Linda Fuchs Farmington Hills Seventh Day Adventist Elementary School class.



HAPPY DAY



## Do You Know That . . .

### **Lovett Hall Building** **Greenfield Village Complex** **Dearborn**

★Village Antiques Show - On May 13, 14 and 15, this nationally acclaimed event including exhibitors from Maine to California, will offer high quality antique furniture, jewelry, glass, textiles, toys and time-pieces - plus hundreds of other items for the discerning collector. Call 271-1620 for information.

### **Apple Island** **Orchard Lake**

★The annual tour of this historic island is Sunday, May 15, during Michigan Week. Plan to play and pow-wow where Chief Pontiac and early Indians met and plotted. There are the foundations of homes of later settlers. Enjoy the nature trails on this 35-acre island of Oakland County history. The conducted tours are from 1-5 p.m., starting at the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road, at the west end of Long Lake Road. Call 851-1440 for information.

### **Oakland County Galleria** **Executive Office Building** **1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac**

★Starting May 2, 1988 thru June 15, 1988, Pontiac artists in cooperation with the Pontiac Art Center will exhibit their work in the Galleria.

### **Greenfield Village** **Dearborn**

★Highlighted among the nearly 100 historic buildings this spring and summer are the Firestone Farm, an operating country homestead of the 1960s with costumed farm folk doing chores, tending live stock and raising crops; the recently renovated Menlo Park Laboratory Complex, where Thomas Edison developed his light bulb and other major inventions; and the Wright Cycle Shop, where the famous brothers built their first airplane. The Village experience can include rides on a horse-drawn carriage, a 1930's bus, a steam-powered locomotive, a Suwanee Steamboat and a 1913 carousel.

## **"Guardian Angel"** **Statue Dedication**

Governor Moses Wisner Gravesite  
Oak Hill Cemetery, Pontiac, May 26th

Congratulations are due Cora Bradshaw, retired Pontiac school teacher, for her success in completion of the Bicentennial project for the 3rd grade students in Pontiac schools who helped to raise funds to purchase the "Guardian Angel". Special plans are in the making for the dedication.



## **RECENT LIBRARY** **ACQUISITIONS**

Oldtime Steam Car, by John Bentley.  
Museum and Archival Supplies Handbook. Ontario Museum Assn. & Toronto Area Archivists Group.

Organizing a Local Historical Society, by Clement Silvestro.

Local History Collections, by Enid T. Thompson.

Bibliography on Historical Organization Practices, by Ruth V. O'Connell.

Starting Right, by George & Sherrell Leo.

Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections, by Marie C. Malaro.

Map of Territories of Michigan & Wisconsin, 1856, by John Turner.

How to Know Period Styles in Furniture, by W. L. Kimerly.

The William Elsholz Collection of Early American Glass.

Commerce Cemetery Records.

Waterford Cemetery Records.

First Congregational Church of Pontiac Records 1832-1893. Transcript by Faye M. Donelson.

Great Lakes Shipwrecks & Survivals, by William Ratigan (Edmund Fitzgerald Edition)

Old Lansing Town. Edited by Hazel Proctor.

A Michigan Reader: 11,000 B.C. to A.D. 1865. Edited by George May & Herbert Brinks.

A Michigan Reader: 1865 to the Present. Edited by Robert Warner & C. Warren Vanderhill.

A Survey of the Buildings of Mackinac Island, by Victor Hugg.

Michigan: A State Anthology. Edited by David D. Anderson.

Booklet on Architectural & Planning Solutions, by Kirk & Koskela Architects, P.C.

View From the Veranda, by Phil Porter.  
Michigan - Natural Resources Magazine, May-June 1981.

Michigan in the Civil War, 1861-1865, by Robertson.



## **New** **Members**

We welcome our new members and appreciate their support of the Society and its programs.

Mr. & Mrs. James Arminski  
Ms. Gayle Chamberlain  
Mr. Ivan Helfman  
Mrs. Dexter Kennedy  
Mr. & Mrs. James Laarman  
Ms. Mary Parkes  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Thomas

ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP  
Tuesday Musical of Pontiac

## **In Memoriam**

It is with regret we report the death of the following members:

Mrs. H. E. McCulloch  
Mr. C. Frederic Stanton  
Mrs. Murlin Vaughn  
Mr. J. Barbour Williams

### **EDITORIAL STAFF**

Ross Callaway, Pauline Harrison, Dick Jones and Marion Roush.

*Photography credit:* Jack Moore

*Oral History Feature:* Connie Lektizian

### **Book Review - F.Y.I.** **Stewards of the State**

#### The Governors of Michigan

By George Weeks

Co-Published by Detroit News and Historical Society of Michigan, 1987

The author, George Weeks, is well qualified to have compiled this fascinating history on the Michigan governors, as a political columnist and a dedicated and talented long-time observer of governors.

As residents of Michigan you will be fascinated with this collection of anecdotes and facts about politicians, made more graphic by the liberal use of direct quotes, charts, tables and beautiful photographs.

The flavor of this book could be illustrated by this direct quote:

"Tell me," asked a dinner companion of Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Cal Coolidge,

"What do you do?"

"I'm the lieutenant governor."

"That's wonderful. Tell me all about it."

"I just did."

It reads like many novels rolled into one.

-Pauline Harrison