



LOCAL MEMORIAL DAY PARADE MARCHES INTO HISTORY



Military units, like this naval contingent, always captured public interest in Pontiac's Memorial Day parades.

Courtesy of

Harris Studio of Photography, Pontiac, MI

Article by Charles H. Martinez

Sadly, a lack of interest has stilled the tramp of marching feet and reduced the sound of martial music to an echo as Pontiac's long Memorial Day tradition has apparently ended. The last celebration took place in 1991. For those not indifferent to the supreme sacrifice made by those to keep this nation secure, there are individual trips to local cemeteries or parades in other Oakland County communities. Admittedly, local sponsors find it difficult to stir up patriotic enthusiasm in smaller cities that are economically strapped and suffering high unemployment.

The custom of decorating the graves of fallen warriors dates back to the earliest days of civilization; an irony for some who believe wars to be uncivilized practices. In this nation most historians place the origin of Memorial Day (first known as Decoration Day) at Waterloo, New York, in May of 1865. It was then near the end of the Civil War that veterans gathered to pay tribute to their late comrades in arms. Three years later Gen. John A. Logan, commander of the GAR, learned of the New

York ceremony and ordered his followers to establish May 30 as the day to place flowers on the graves of those who "died in defense of their country during the late rebellion." Others, like Lloyd Lewis, author of *Myths After Lincoln*, believe the prolonged outpouring of grief after Lincoln's assassination set a national mood for the establishment of such a day of mourning.

Not surprisingly, strong disagreement was registered by southern historians over tying this day of remembrance to Lincoln's death or northern claims of initiating the ritual. In fact, numerous southern towns say they set the example in honoring their war dead. The earliest ceremony was said to have been held on June 1, 1861, in Warrentown, Virginia at the grave of John Quincy Marr, a Confederate soldier.

The first Memorial Day observed in Pontiac, for which we have details, occurred in 1869. It began inauspiciously on a rainy June 4, a date selected after bad weather had forced cancellation of a planned

MAY ANNUAL DINNERS - "Revived"



For the past two years we had combined the Annual Dinner with the Annual Meeting based on the annual calendar fiscal year. We will continue to have our Annual Meeting at the beginning of the year but will go back to the pleasant custom of the Annual May Dinner, as a strictly social occasion. Invitations will be sent out soon. We all look forward to a warm, pleasant Spring and an enjoyable dining experience!



TOUR TIME



Tours at the Pine Grove complex will be available from April - December of each year for interested groups.

GAZETTE SUPPLEMENT FEATURES LINCOLN TRIBUTE

Accompanying this issue of the *Oakland Gazette* is a supplement composed of a series of articles on the "Lincoln Legend" written by our Operations Manager, Charles H. Martinez.

celebration the week before. Launching the event was a parade led by the Pontiac Silver Cornet Band. Other elements in the procession were the Knights Templars, Odd Fellows, Fire Department, and Sunday school students. The groups marched up Saginaw Street to the old Clinton Hall. There a speech was delivered by the Rev. W.H. Shier on Oakland County's contribution to the Civil War effort.

The next year the weather was more favorable and part of the ceremonies were conducted at Oak Hill Cemetery where the grave of Gen. Richardson was decorated with flowers. A crowd estimated at three to four thousand witnessed this event in 1870.

After World War II, Pontiac's Memorial Day ceremonies featured parades that started on Saginaw Street at Lawrence and marched up to Oakland Avenue where a Civil War monument formerly stood. Following an appropriate salute to those who died in that conflict, additional activities would take place at Wisner Stadium, or a motorcade might form and travel to Perry Mount Park Cemetery for additional wreath laying.

BOOK REVIEW F.Y.I.

Arms & Equipment of the Civil War

By Jack Coggins

With more than 500 illustrations artist, author, Jack Coggins presents the reader with a fascinating account of the types of weapons and equipment used by the Blue and the Grey. Coggins sheds light on the tactics, strategies and outcomes of the Civil War based largely upon the weapons, clothing and equipment used and how the troops coped with what they had. This Civil War presentation brings the reader a real "behind the scenes" feeling. A must for the Civil War buffs!

- Pauline Harrison -

In recognition of Memorial Day our Vintage Clothing Committee will have on display military uniforms from American wars actually worn by soldiers of those wars. All are from our collection. Come visit us!

MAIL BAG



Mrs. Jane Doerr
February 8, 1993

Dear Jane:

On behalf of the Society I wish to express our heartfelt thanks for your generous donation to be applied to our proposed library. This gift in your name and that of your children: Many June, John, and Richard will hopefully serve as a catalyst for other donations.

Your affirmation of Mr. Powell's efforts and that of the architectural firm of Jickling, Lyman, and Powell is well stated.

Sincerely,
Charles Martinez
Operations Manager

Gretchen Adler

Dear Ms. Adler:

I am enclosing my membership fee for the coming year. I visited Pontiac in September of '91 with my granddaughter, Traci, who wanted to see where I grew up. All my family is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery and was visited by us. We also visited your Historical Society and met some lovely people who were very kind to us who showed an interest in my history which excited me since it has been a long time since I visited my home state.

Please send me your Newsletters and brochures to let me know what is going on in the Society and Oakland County.

Sincerely,
Alice Louise Tremblay
Graham Kohlman

1249 Pine Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21229

Jack Moore, Sid Olson, and Bob Reynnells
January 5, 1993

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the students and staff of the Perdue Basic Education classes, we would like to thank you for presenting your program on "Pioneer Tools" at our school on November 24, 1992.

The assembly was interesting and educational to all who attended. We enjoyed being able to get a close up view of the artifacts, and found your talk most informative.

Sincerely,
Robert Siggall, Principal
Judy Haines, Teacher

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE YEAR 1992

WELCOME!

Mrs. Beverly Bradley, Traverse City - Life Member
Francis W. Rockwell, Bloomfield Hills - Patron
Catherine McCrindle, Pontiac
Delores Telixky, Lake Orion
Beth Watchpocket, Waterford
Cora Bradshaw, Pontiac
James Dermody, Northville
Barbara McGlothlin, Pontiac
Melissa Pflug and Marjorie Pflug, Birmingham
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Sorenson, Howell
Voorhees Siple Funeral Home of Pontiac - Business
Steven Darling, Waterford
Mayme Rinker, Waterford
Mary Killian, Pontiac
Jane Windeler, Waterford
Alice Osmun, Rochester Hills
Mr. F.A. Cavataio, Clarkston
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Cate, Waterford
Leon B. Storm, Lake Orion
Dorothy Lafferty, Waterford
Merle Barnard, Waterford
Mark Mastrangel, Sylvan Lake
Lynn Schwartz, Waterford
Anna Crawford, Keego Harbor
Mr. & Mrs. Guy Duffield, Waterford
Edwin Carson, Ashland, Oregon
Michael Ponder, Lake Orion
Mr. & Mrs. Dave Downing, Lake Orion
Eleanore McCurry, Sylvan Lake
Joan Jones, Lake Angelus
Pamela Zawacki, Washington, MI
John Stamey, Auburn Hills
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Packard, Waterford

SOCIETY OFFICERS - 1993

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First Vice President Clarke Kimball
Second Vice President Jack Moore
Secretary Miriam Foxman
Treasurer Kitty Daggy

Editorial Staff

Pauline Harrison, Editor
Ross Callaway, Assoc. Editor
Staff: Charles Martinez
Photography: Jack Moore
Bob Reynnells

COMMITTEES

Master Plan & Policy
Accessions
Library
Manuscripts
Oral History
Clothing
By-Laws
Finance & Budget
Membership
Nominating
Crafts
Education
Farm Museum
Guides
Gift Shoppe
House/Summer Kitchen
Maintenance
New Library Program

CHAIRPEOPLE

Gretchen Adler
Gil Haven
Lillian Paull
Virginia Clohset
Connie Scafe
Pauline Harrison
Betty Adams
Jack Moore
LaVon DeLisle
Faye Donelson
LaVon DeLisle/Susan Metzdorf
Irma McMillen
Jack Moore/Robert Reynnells
Miriam Foxman/Connie Scafe
Margaret Greer
Priscilla Gayton/Susan Metzdorf
Don Daggy/Clarke Kimball
Gretchen Adler

Property Records & Locations
Publicity & Publications
Schoolhouse
Exhibits

Gil Haven
Ross Callaway/Pauline Harrison
Muriel Crossman
Priscilla Gayton

Annual Meeting (1993)
Ice Cream Social
Victorian Christmas
Annual Spring Dinner
Annual Meeting (1994)

Judy Huttenlocher/Charles Martinez
Don & Kitty Daggy

HIGHLIGHTS

"OUTREACH", OCPHS ACTIVITY

Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League's Walking Tour on Pontiac's Historic Franklin Boulevard



A sellout crowd of 700 people walking the tour on a rainy Sunday afternoon last October.



Doris Smith, OCPHS member, with two gentlemen from the Preservation League, workers for the Tour.

Last Fall, Doris Smith approached our Board for help in hosting this tour, and several of our members came forward to assist as Tour Guides, as well as setting up and serving in a Hospitality Room at the YWCA adjacent to the tour. We obtained and served donated cider, doughnuts, and coffee. We also displayed some of our historic collections. Our efforts were well received, and we all enjoyed a warm and interesting time. Many thanks to our members, Vivian Hardy, Jean Milton, Rex Lemoreaux, and Bob Reynnells. When our Society gives presentations or actively volunteers services to outside groups representing this Society, we call this our "OUTREACH ACTIVITY PROGRAM."

- Pauline Harrison

HISTORIC OAKLAND COUNTY LEDGER REVEALED

By Gretchen Adler

The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, founded in 1874, has in its collection a ledger compiled by early officers. The ledger lists the names of 1,707 pioneers of Oakland County. The names are cross-referenced to a list which denotes when each person came to Oakland County, when and where they settled in the county, what their occupation was, plus birth and death data.

It is an extremely interesting and valuable resource. In reading through this ledger, we wondered how many descendents of these early pioneers still reside in Oakland County.

We have listed just a few of the names because space does not allow all 1,707 to be printed here. If you think one of your Oakland County ancestors might have been on this list, why not write us or come in and check this ledger.

Among those named are:

Archibald Greene	Justus Barden
David Harmon	Augustus Leggett
William Axford	Thomas Grow
Margarette Riker Jewell	Elizabeth Millard Travis

HERB GARDEN RECIPE - A Whiff of Spring!



At last year's Ice Cream Social many herb plants were sold from our Wisner garden (lovingly tended by Jim Tedesco). The herbs received enthusiastic response which not only resulted in a sellout, but also brought about a "healthy" exchange of herb knowledge. Frank Gallardo's daughter, Vicki, from Goodrich offered to share her recipe for . . .

HERB JELLY

*2 c. herb infusion	1/2 bottle Certo
1/4 c. vinegar	gr. food color
4 1/4 c. sugar	6 oz. glasses

*Infusion Prep: Pour 2 1/2 c. boiling water over 4 T. dried herbs.

Cover, let stand 15". Transfer 2 c. into large kettle. Add vinegar and sugar; cook and stir on high until sugar dissolves. Stir in color for desired shade. When mixture boils, stir in Pectin and boil one minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, skim, and seal in jars. Use any two herbs of - Basil, Marjoram, Rosemary, Sage, Terragon, Thyme, Peppermint.

REASONS TO CELEBRATE!

- The year 1994 will mark the 150th anniversary of Moses Wisner's purchase of the "Pine Grove" property.
- In 1995 the Society will observe its 50th anniversary at this site.

ARCHEOLOGICAL UPDATE

Currently in the basement of the Wisner House a short archeological dig is in process. This was started on February 8th and will be concluded before the end of this month. The purpose of this dig is to attempt to date a particular section of the house, according to archeological assistant, Michael Dennie.

REGOGNITION OF DONATIONS

- Metal shelving was donated in answer to vintage clothing storage needs donated by Yvonne DeLisle.
- In January, Gail's Office Supply Company donated a heavy duty wheeled cart to be used by the Library and Manuscript Chairpersons for archival storage.

Not only is owner Max Gail a musician of note, but descends from an early pioneer, Stephen V.R. Trowbridge, who settled in Troy Township in 1821. Trowbridge was a member of the Territorial Council, a State Senator, and County Assessor. He died in 1859 and is buried in the Beach Road Cemetery.

-Virginia Clohset

PROFILES ... From our Members

MEMBER: LOIS A. LANCE (Mrs. Donald Lance)

BIRTHPLACE: Detroit, Michigan, Sept. 9, 1917

HOMES: Royal Oak, 1924 - Troy, 1946 - Royal Oak - 1976 - present

CAREER: School Secretary, Troy; Substitute Teacher, Troy & Clawson; Antique Dealer, Canada; Writer & Research Historian

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE: Saving the Caswell House, Troy; Publishing "Pathways of History Through Troy" 1976; Obtaining Michigan Historical Marker for First Baptist Church of Royal Oak, 1989; Watching sunsets on Lake Huron.

HOBBIES: Collecting antique quilts and other textiles; collecting antique pattern glass (including several pieces of "Michigan" pattern); participating in DAR.

OCPHS INTERESTS: Member since 1984; Restoration of Wisner House and archives; she particularly admires Betty Adams, who helped make it all possible.

HISTORICAL INTERESTS: Local history of buildings and people.

PHILOSOPHY: "Every day is a fresh beginning; every morn is the world made new."



The Year of No Summer

by Lois Lance

July 1992 has come and gone, and most people say "Thank Goodness!" We had the coldest average temperatures for our favorite summer month that we have had in more than 100 years.

The National Weather Service also reported that the July total rainfall for the Detroit area was 5.91 inches, 2.81 inches more than the July average as recorded back into the 19th century.

But we may not have seen the worst of the unusual weather yet, in spite of the warmer days of the last week. Many scientists are comparing 1992 to the years 1862 and 1817.

When Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines erupted last year, it sent an estimated 20 million tons of sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere, forming droplets which are floating 12 to 14 miles above the surface of the earth. Scientists are blaming that natural disaster for the extremely chilly weather of this summer, and say the effects might last for another couple of years, at least. Planet Earth has cooled off about 1°F since the eruption of Pinatubo.

The interesting thing is that this happened before.

Mount Tambora on the Indonesian island of Subawa erupted in April 1815, rated as the most explosive volcano of the last 10,000 years. Most of the eye-witnesses to that disaster were killed; only 26 people out of a population of 12,000 on the island survived.

The volcanic dust from Tambora circled the globe and fell on North America beginning in 1816. That year saw snow or killing frosts in every one of the summer months, and was called "The Year of No Summer." The next year was just as bad.

The farmers of New England were bewildered and devastated. A descendant of one of those families, Don Lance of Royal Oak, has evidence of the weird weather of 1816 and 1817 in a copy of a day book kept by Zebulon Allen, Lance's great-great-grandfather. Old Zeb settled on 60 acres in the Berkshire Mountains near Windsor, Massachusetts in 1795. He built a beautiful house which still stands, a sawmill on the Westfield River, and raised a family of eight children at this place. He did not join the westward migration, although his children did a generation later. His weather entries are terse, but worthy of note:

"Thursday 6 of June (1817) it snowed the most of the day. froze (sic) the plowed ground so as to bear a man that night. June 7: I chopt with a new frock overcoat and jacket on & it snowed and was very cold to froze the ground for 5 nights. June 30, a frost. July 9 & 10, a frost. July 26, frost.

August 22, considerable frost. August 29, another frost. Sept. 26 and 27, frost to kill things entirely."

...and so it behooves us not to grumble about the weather, things could get worse.

STATE OF THE OCPHS YEAR - 1992

TREASURER - Submitted the Society's financial report which had been reviewed by an outside auditor, and found to be acceptable. It was placed on file at the Society's office. Treasurer Judy Dorchak wishes to express her thanks to Kitty Daggy for her continued help, support, and friendship. Kitty will again be our Treasurer. Judy's family responsibilities necessitated her resignation as Treasurer.

FINANCE - The committee met to establish the budget and explore possibilities for endowment fund and Dawson Memorial fluid investments.
- Kitty Daggy

MEMBERSHIP - The following dues schedule will go into effect May first:

Individual Membership	\$15.00
Couple	\$25.00
Senior Membership	\$12.00
Senior Couple	\$20.00
Family Membership (Children under 17)	\$30.00
Student (17 and under)	\$ 5.00
Benefactor (individual)	\$75.00
Patron (individual)	\$50.00
Life Member (Endowment)	\$200.00
Couples Life Membership (Endowment)	\$300.00
Business Sustaining	\$150.00
Organization Membership (non-profit)	\$50.00

Katherine Daggy, Chairman
Gretchen Adler, Secretary

MASTER PLAN/POLICY & PROCEDURE - Master Plan was reviewed and found revisions were unneeded. Policies covering Accession/Deaccession aspects is being considered. A committee was appointed to study space problems. "Codification" of the Policy Manual was looked into.
- Betty Adams

PROPERTY RECORDS & LOCATIONS - In-depth auditing of Society collections is being initiated in relation to the Accession Directories. The new Deaccession and/or Disposal Request form will be used in this endeavor in hopes of relieving the space crunch and promote greater selectivity of collection items.
- Jack Moore, et al

PUBLICITY & PUBLISHING - A change was made in the printing facility which reduced the cost of the Gazette by 50%. Goals for 1993 include promoting the idea of a pre-planned yearly "Calendar of Events", and increased use of external publications.
- Pauline Harrison, et al

SCHOOLHOUSE - Visiting students numbered 931. Of which 513 used the classroom for study.
- Muriel Crossman

LIBRARY - Additions of 61 books, 56 pamphlets, 13 maps, 12 photos, 8 scrapbooks revised, 137 researchers, 18 of whom were out of state
- Lillian Paull

MANUSCRIPT - Completed the inventorying of the Elizabeth D. Brown collection.
- Virginia Clohset

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEES - All reported a busy year and productive plans for 1993.

- Don Daggy, Jack Moore, Clark Kimball

ACCESSIONS - 1992 showed 45 donors and 100 items.
- Rex Lamoreaux

NEW LIBRARY - A down-scaled version of the original plans were developed for economic reasons. The Dawson Memorial Fund will provide money for matching grants, and seed money is currently in CD's and Money Market account. - Betty Adams, et al

These items are just an overview based upon Annual Reports offered by the Chairpersons in an effort to afford our members "what's going on" with your Society, and is not inclusive of all details. We hope this will serve to peak your interest.
- The Editor

Lincoln Slept Here?!

by Charles H. Martinez

Two figures of major historic proportions have been linked to Oakland County: the Ottawa chieftain Pontiac and Abraham Lincoln. Both connections appear mythic. Lincoln's alleged presence here is more immediate in terms of time and location. The latter element is said to involve actual contact with Moses Wisner and the mansion Pine Grove.

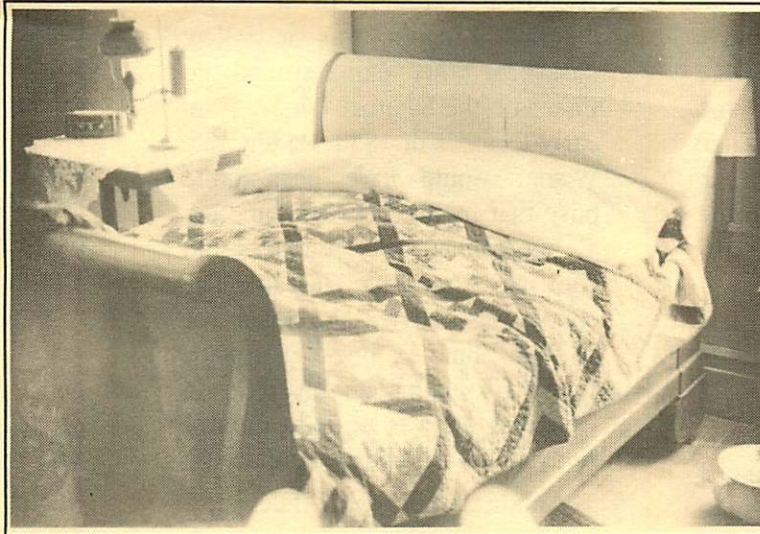
Who is responsible for this charming Lincoln legend? Recent inspection of the Cheal family scrapbook, a collection of twentieth-century newspaper clippings held in the Society library, confirms a suspected source. The first clue is found in a *Pontiac Daily Press* article by Joe Haas which is headlined "Funds Sought to Preserve Wisner Historical Shrine." Haas wrote:

In addition to the papers and relics it will house, the house itself is interesting historically. Abraham Lincoln is said to have stopped here as Gov. Wisner's guest on one occasion and the bed on which the Great Emancipator slept remains there in an excellent state of preservation.

Although the article's date is missing, reference to the possible Society purchase of the estate places it most likely around 1945.

No authorship is shown for the second newspaper story which carries a pencilled date of "9-24-43" on the scrapbook page adjacent to the clipping. Here the writer colorfully noted:

One of the visitors at the old Wisner house was a gangling



If he ever spent the night, Lincoln would have found Pine Grove's sleigh bed a tight fit for his lanky frame.

Courtesy of Sayles Studio

Illinois lawyer who telescoped his awkward frame into one of the Wisner beds and stayed all night. What the two lawyers talked about during the visit never was known. The visitor was Abe Lincoln of Springfield, Illinois, for whom Wisner was to fight in the war between the states.

The mistress of Pine Grove when these stories were written was Florence Clark Wallace. She was the granddaughter of Moses and Angeolina Wisner. In fact,

the last cited news article credits Florence for her stewardship "in preserving the charm that went with the home of a wealthy and progressive Michigan pioneer...." There seems to be little doubt that she was the disseminator of the tale. Her son, David Clark Wallace, recalled his mother often mentioning Lincoln's visit although he never put much stock in it himself. Betty Adams, past president of the Society, also heard the story from Mrs. Wallace, whom she said learned of the event from grandmother Angeolina. If so, why this historic sleep-over escaped the notice of the local press, and was never proudly mentioned by other family members and friends remains a mystery.

Proving a negative can often be an exercise in frustration if not futility. But, focusing on the key elements of the tale (Wisner, Lincoln, and Pine Grove) help us in assessing its probability. Much is owed Ruth Priestley for her series of articles in this publication in the 1970s on the Wisner family. Nevertheless our knowledge of Moses Wisner is quite limited alongside the biographical data amassed on Lincoln. More has been written on the life of the sixteenth President of the United States than any other American.

Over twenty years ago a three-volume reference work was completed which sought to trace Lincoln's activities on a day-to-day basis from his birth in 1809 to his assassination in 1865. Comparatively speaking not much could be compiled on Lincoln's youth or up to 1829, which fortunately has little bearing on the question at hand. In contrast, documentation for Lincoln's presidential years is so complete that only some 41 days of this period remain blank to the historian. Recalling that Wisner died in early 1863 shortens this period of potential contact even further. Moreover, to suggest that Lincoln as Chief Executive journeyed from Washington, D.C. to Pontiac unnoticed during the early years of that conflict, when the fate of this nation hung in the balance, stretches credulity to the breaking point.

As for the balance of Lincoln's life (1829-1860), this remaining time span for a possible face-to-face meeting between principals can be reduced at least 15 years, leaving us with a starting point of 1844. Prior to then it would have been impossible for Lincoln to visit Wisner at Pine Grove since the latter had yet to purchase the property. Lincoln was a prolific letter writer for most of his life, but particularly during the years 1844 to 1860 when he was active in law or politics. This fact, coupled with the recorded observations of friends and associates, ledger entries, court dockets, and personal appearances at political events leaves little opportunity for a surreptitious Lincoln sojourn to the Oakland County seat.

It has been suggested that an opportunity for a meeting between the two was present in the early

autumn of 1848. It was then that Lincoln, having completed his first Congressional session as a Representative from Illinois, was making his way home to Springfield from Washington, D.C., after a side trip to New England. Part of the return involved travel on the Great Lakes where some believe Lincoln went ashore at Detroit and proceeded overland by rail or stagecoach rather than follow a water route all the way to Chicago. Levi North, an Illinois attorney and Lincoln contemporary, refuted this Detroit departure scenario in a letter now held by that State's Historical Library. In it North claimed Lincoln was a fellow passenger who "came around the Lakes on the Steamer *Globe*..." in early October of 1848. At any rate Wisner would have been quite busy that month between handling a burgeoning law practice and courting Angeolina Hascall. The couple was married November 16, 1848 in Flint. As for other trips by Lincoln to complete his term in Congress there is no indication of stops at Detroit and/or Pontiac.

Another apocryphal tale of a meeting - but this time away from Pine Grove - supposedly happened on July 6, 1854 at the formation of the Republican Party "under the oaks" in Jackson, Michigan. It is said that Wisner was there but alas historians claim Lincoln was not. The records show Abe was in Springfield, Illinois on that date defending a client in U.S. Circuit Court.

Lincoln did come to Michigan in 1856 when on August 27th he was one of several speakers at a huge Republican gathering in Kalamazoo. While hardly as memorable as his "House Divided" speech in 1858 or his Gettysburg Address in 1863, Abe's words and manner of delivery marked him as

a force to be reckoned with in future politics. Historians consider this was Lincoln's only recorded visit to the Wolverine State. Wisner may have been in the audience and heard Lincoln that day. If so, he never alluded to the event in any of his known public utterances according to extant documents.

As for his part Wisner was also making a name for himself in the 1856 Presidential campaign by supporting John C. Fremont. According to a recently located document, he was among a group of distinguished speakers at a Republican rally in Corunna, the Shiawassee County seat, on October 22, 1856. There Wisner shared the platform with the likes of Governor Kingsley Bingham and future U.S. Senator Zachariah Chandler: opponents all to the extension of slavery and supporters of "Free Speech, Free Territory and Fremont."

If Wisner and Lincoln never met at Pine Grove, and probably nowhere else, what was the catalyst for this tale? No doubt Mrs. Wallace heard many family stories as a child and confused her grandmother's reminiscences with a celebrated encounter that did take place during Wisner's term as Governor. It was in September of 1860 that Governor Wisner officially welcomed the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII of Great Britain, to Michigan and the United States. Having completed a tour of Canada, the young Prince was reported to have boarded a ferry-boat on the Windsor side of the Detroit River where he met a delegation of dignitaries led by Governor Wisner. The party next crossed the river amid fireworks and great fanfare to disembark at the foot of Woodward Avenue in Detroit. The Governor then accompanied the Prince and his

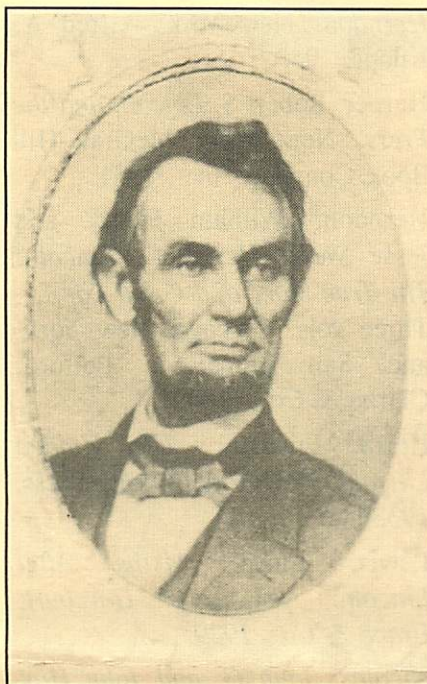
entourage to the Russell House where a banquet was held.

As this State's first lady and one who loved to entertain, Angeolina Wisner must have often told of this affair which incidentally took place only seven weeks prior to another memorable occasion - the first Presidential election victory of Abraham Lincoln. To a young, impressive granddaughter the two historical figures and events may have become intertwined over the years. And who could really fault her memory lapse. The aura of Lincoln continues to dazzle us. His rise from humble origins to the highest office in the land, his many virtues tested by the greatest calamity this nation has ever endured, and his sudden tragic death at the hand of an assassin, have elevated him to the stature of folk hero. But it is his most endearing human qualities of modesty and common sense that have made him a timeless role model. As Lincoln once told a reporter in 1864, "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." The same may be said for Moses Wisner who also gave his life for the freedom of others. That his granddaughter remembered very well.

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Charles H. Martinez

July 26, 1947 marked the opening of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Lincoln scholars and historians across the world had eagerly awaited that date for 21 years - a span stipulated by Lincoln's son, Robert Todd, which would commence upon his death. "This



Recently discovered in the Society's photo collection is this likeness of President Abraham Lincoln.

condition is imposed by me because said papers contain many references of a private nature to the immediate ancestors of persons now living, which in my judgement, should not be made public..." was the gist of the Robert Todd rationale for the delay.

Speculation ran rampant as to the sensitivity of this material. It was well known that Robert Todd despised the 1889 biography of his father by Herndon and Weik. In it William Herndon, once Abraham Lincoln's law partner and confidant, questioned the legitimacy of Abe's mother, Nancy Hanks; the shiftless style life of Lincoln's father; Abe's love for Ann Rutledge and his mental breakdown following her death. But, Herndon saved special venom for Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd, whom he claimed made her husband's life a living hell. And, in terms of spiritual qualities, Lincoln's lack of association with

organized religion cast him as an "infidel," at least in the eyes of Herndon. Such charges, if true, it was felt would more than tarnish the Lincoln legend.

In reality, Robert Todd's collection of his father's papers was a poor place to find these answers. They would hardly be lurking in Lincoln's presidential correspondence which his son deposited in the Library of Congress in 1919. In addition, certain historians believe Robert Todd may have destroyed some of his father's personal letters, and as much of his mother's correspondence as he could get his hands on dating to the period of her diminished mental capacity. His stated reason for such action was to preserve family privacy. One insinuation made by Herndon was laid to rest, however, with the opening of the collection in Washington, D.C.; that being the legitimacy of Abraham Lincoln himself. The other charges have long since been eliminated or the evidence said to support them found to be less than compelling.

Herndon's defenders point out that his biography was designed to show how far a person with a burning desire to succeed could climb, even when he had to start from the lowest rung on the socio-economic ladder. Such ascent to Mount Olympus, as charted by Herndon, has been held as a model for the young even to this day. The author of this article received from his parents a framed tribute to Abraham Lincoln conveying such sentiments in 1949. Years later it was dutifully passed to his sons, and will shortly become the property of his grandson, Michael Ryan. The following text may be flawed historically but it still serves to inspire.

READ THIS AGAIN

When Abraham Lincoln was a young man he ran for Legislature in Illinois and was defeated.

He next entered business, failed and spent the next seventeen years paying up the debts of a worthless partner.

He was in love with a beautiful young woman, became engaged, then she died.

Later he married a woman who was a constant burden to him.

Entering politics again, he ran for Congress and was defeated.

He then tried to get an appointment to the United States Land Office but failed.

He became a candidate for the United States Senate and was badly defeated.

In 1856 he was a candidate for Vice-President and again was defeated.

In 1858 he was defeated by Douglas.

One failure after another - bad failures - great setbacks. In the face of this he eventually became one of the country's greatest men, if not the greatest.

SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following represent a wide range of biographies on Abraham Lincoln and, in some instances, give important insights into the writers themselves:

Angle, Paul M., editor. *Herndon's Life of Lincoln*. New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1930.

Beveridge, Albert J. *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*, Two vols. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928.

Donald, David. *Lincoln's*

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About the author:

Charles H. Martinez became the Society's Operations Manager in January of 1991. He had previously served for some 27 years as a contract archaeologist at several universities and cultural resource management firms in Michigan. Among the nearly 100 sites he has excavated are such examples as the

Renaissance Center, Hart Memorial Plaza, Fort Wayne Museum parade ground, and the Hodges property along the I-696 corridor - areas located in either Wayne or Oakland counties. Last year he directed a dig at Pine Grove to determine the location and extent of a greenhouse once attached to the mansion. Upon completing the analysis of the recovered materials from that dig, Martinez plans to investigate a well situated to the west of the summer kitchen. His interest in Lincoln dates back to his youth when he became the beneficiary of his grandfather's collection of books on the sixteenth president of the United States.

LINCOLN AND KENNEDY: DEADLY COINCIDENCES

Abraham Lincoln was the first American president to die from an assassin's bullet: John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the most recent. These tragedies for their families and the American psyche were strangely linked. Both men were shot in the back of the head on a Friday while in the company of their wives. Both assassins were from the South and were in turn killed before they could be brought to trial. Lincoln and Kennedy were equally fatalistic over the possibility of being murdered while in office. Both shared these sentiments with family and friends shortly before they died. Lincoln's last conscious moments were spent watching a play in Ford's Theater. Kennedy was struck while riding in a Lincoln limousine, the product of the Ford Motor Company.