



Restoration & Maintenance Activity At Gift Shoppe and Wisner House



*Entrance into renovated
Gift Shoppe*



*Visitors - Oakland Christian
School. Adam Verville and
Julie Walton "perusing".*

GIFT SHOPPE FACE LIFT -

Beth Watchpocket joined the Gift Shoppe Crafters a few years ago and some months ago started to visualize a more appealing decor for the Shoppe. After discussing it with Chairpersons Yvonne Delisle, Susan Metzdorf, and Margaret Greer they approached President Gretchen Adler; she concurred and the big make-over began.

Beth and husband, Ozzie developed the renovation plan and contributed materials, which included paint for pale pink walls, old-type lace curtain panels adorned with deep pink silk roses, and area rugs to match along with white wall shelving. The Crafters worked diligently in moving, cleaning, and re-arranging. Susan Metzdorf with husband, Tom wielded the paint brushes.

Upon completion, it looked like a magic wand that created a delicate old-world Victorian Parlor look. The Gift Shoppe was housed originally at the Wisner House just off the parlor, nestled in what was probably the nursery. Because the Crafters create their products at the Carriage House, it was thought more fitting to move the Shoppe there a few

years ago. This meant moving the historic office set-up, including the Wooton desk to where the Shoppe had been.

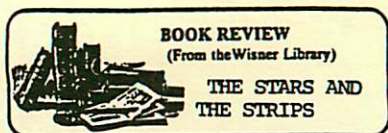
All are encouraged to come take a look at the changed Shoppe, browse, and yes even buy! They are featuring plates which have been given a decorative antique-look. The Crafters are at the Carriage House most every Wednesday from about 10:00 to 12:00, and when groups are touring. Don't forget to stop in at ICE-CREAM SOCIAL TIME, Sunday, August 14th from 1:00 to 5:00.

THIS "OLD WISNER HOUSE" -

Spring cleaning was attacked at the Wisner House by Susan Metzdorf and President Gretchen Adler as they washed windows, polished furniture with lemon oil and re-arranged furnishings to create an authentic "lived-in" look.

(Incidentally, your help in this area would be heartily welcomed by Gretchen & Susan.)

- Pauline Harrison



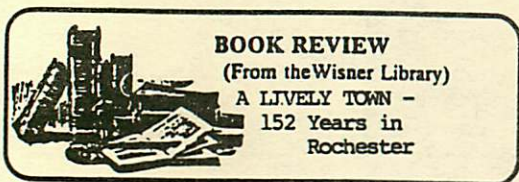
By Boleslaw and Mastai

This Book covering 200 years (1773-1973) shows our national flag in all its various and surprising incarnations - as folk art, and as a profoundly moving expression of the feelings of generations of Americans about the events and spirit of their country's growth.

Resplendent with 400 color photographs, it is based largely on the author's collection of antique flags. Brought together in this book, they provide a unique historical document as well as a revelation of the Stars and Stripes as a treasured American art.

NOTE: Our Society has an interesting collection of antique flags that have been displayed at the Wisner complex from time to time.

F.Y.I. *Published in Michigan History Magazine, Jan./Feb., 1994*



Published by - The Rochester Centennial Commission

Edited by - Jim Jackson, 1969

Excerpts presented by - Pauline Harrison for the
OAKLAND GAZETTE

ROCHESTER'S FIRST FAMILY -

In 1813 James Graham, his wife Mary, their daughter, sons Alexander and Benjamin and their wives, crossed the Detroit River on a raft, with five cows and three pigs swimming alongside. After journeying inland, they proceeded to build a log house in the general area of Avon Rd. and Livernois. Son Alexander and his wife built a home in the proximity of what would become to be Third St. in the Spring of 1817. There was born, son James, first non-indigenous child to be born in Avon Township, and there, Mrs. Alexander Graham decided to call the settlement, Rochester, after her home town in New York.

Territorial Governor Lewis Cass would proclaim Oakland a County three years after James Graham Sr. arrived. Fifty-two years after the Grahams left the trail and settled down, the village of Rochester was incorporated. The James Graham Family did it alone in 1817. They were the first!

ROCHESTER CIVIL WAR HERO -

Lt. Samuel Harris raised Company A of the fifth Michigan Cavalry in Avon Township. While leading a patrol in advance of the main troops, Harris saved the life of a wife of a Confederate officer. He was captured a few days later, and, according to a report in the *Rochester Clarion*, written in 1959, "he was waiting to

be court martialed and hanged, when the wife of the confederate officer . . . wrote to the wife of Jefferson Davis and through (Davis) and Robert E. Lee, Harris's release was obtained."

Harris did not return to Rochester, but in 1917 he offered a granite fountain to the town. It was originally placed, according to his wish, at the center of the intersection of Main and Fourth . . . [Ultimately] the fountain was placed in Avon Park.

ROCHESTER, FROM VILLAGE TO CITY -

The coming of the railroads marked the end of Rochester as a frontier hamlet. The automobile ended its isolation, the depression finished it as an agricultural center, and the movement of people and industry outward from Detroit marked the end of Rochester as an out-state village. In March of 1966 the village council met to discuss changing the government to a city, and on February 13, 1967, ninety-eight years after its birth as a village, the electors voted to incorporate as a city. Through the years it had well earned the title of, "A Lively Town."

SPOTLIGHT ON - - -

WATERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5860 Andersonville Rd.

Waterford, MI 48329

President Joy Smith reports that though their Society is new, it has made some real progress in the past few years. Their own TV show "Speaking of the Future", on local cable channel 44 is an attempt to collect a series of taped interviews with long-time residents of Waterford. This is the only oral history series on video tape in America. They entered into competition with other shows from across the U.S. and were one of the finalists. Their series of articles about Waterford history in their local *REMINDER* paper has been well received and they in turn receive meaningful local historical information, Smith reports.

The Waterford Township government has made the Hatchery House available for their use and the group in turn is helping in restoration of this house. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm.

Smith invites you to call her for any information at 623-2449 or Wm. Aebersold at 738-5528



The Hatchery House. The home of the Waterford Historical Society.



Former Society President Honored -
Rosamond Haeblerle has been accepted in the *Who's Who of American Women*. Our congratulations to Rosamond!

New Members Welcomed:

Jenny B. Derwich, Franklin, MI
Nancy Johnson, Birmingham, MI
Lyn Genest Siefert, Rochester Hills, MI
Nancy Sanchez, Pontiac, MI

**Annual Spring Dinner Celebrated -
Pot Luck Style**

On May 8th of this year not only was Mother's Day celebrated, but also after a two year hiatus of the Society's Annual Dinner, we celebrated this once again with sixty people in the beautiful natural setting of the Rochester Municipal Park.

Potluck dishes were generously donated by many of our "good-cook" people. Home Preservationists Ron Gay and Louis DiForte narrated a slide program of "What Style is It? - Historic House Styles in Pontiac." This proved interesting and informative and many of our Pontiac people could readily relate to this.

Those who attended were impressed by the Rochester Community House and were in favor of celebrating there again in 1995. A reservation has been made for Sunday, May 21, 1995 and we hope to see many of you there. Proceeds of our 1994 dinner were turned over to our Society to help out in general operating expenses. We plan on doing the same in '95.

- Pauline Harrison

Pot Luck Donators

Jean Moore	scalloped potatoes
Rex Lamoreaux	apple sauce
Susan Metzdorf	salad/desert
Nancy Johnson	baked beans
Vivian Hardy	green bean casserole
Connie Scafe	corn casserole
Kitty Daggy	Mexican wedding cake
Jean Milton	Jello salad
Judy Hudala	fruit salad
Virginia Clohset	carrot casserole
Jean Giddings	salads

Our Costumed Guides -

Jean Giddings, Vivian Hardy, Dorothy Tallerday, and Ruth Ward were invited to the Older Person's Commission "OPEN HOUSE" on Sunday June 9th in Rochester, to provide some Victorian atmosphere to the occasion.



PONTIAC'S HISTORIC HOUSING

Pontiac's early houses were built on fieldstone foundations. Around 1900 foundation materials changed to concrete block. Roof pitches were low in the early 1800s becoming steep by 1880 and low again by 1900-1920. Before the early 1900's, building materials were natural wood, stone, brick, cement and stucco. Indoor plumbing, central heat and electricity came about in the latter 1800's in city houses, however, this would not reach the common person until around 1900 or later.

Many historic houses in Pontiac have been made over with materials inconsistent to their original character. One often has to look hard to see past changes that may hide a historic house.

The following historic house styles are common in Pontiac but not inclusive of all styles here. Some features of each are listed.

Greek Revival: 1825-1860

Low-pitched roofs; classical Greek elements including: Doric & Ionic columns, pediments, and cornices; windows located in frieze board; double-hung windows.

Italianate: 1840-1885

Tall, vertical character; low-pitched hip roofs; decorative brackets at eaves; cupola, tower or belvedere; arched and curved-top windows.

Queen Anne: 1880-1910

Asymmetrical facade; steeply-pitched roofs; front gabled roof; partial and full porches; decorative exterior trim (gingerbread); mixture of siding materials such as patterned shingles, patterned brick, stucco, cross-timbering; bay windows; towers.

Prairie: 1890-1920

Low horizontal appearance; hipped roofs; wide overhanging eaves; simple ornamentation; squatty square porch columns; leaded-glass windows; natural oak interior trim.

Arts & Crafts (Craftsman): 1890-1920

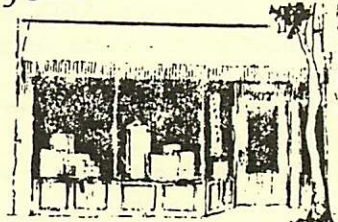
Front-gable low-pitched roof; simple yet decorative rafter trails, roof beams and brackets; exposed rafters at roof overhangs; bungalow-style houses; door and window styles often shared with Prairie houses.

Tudor Revival: 1890-1940

Stucco, wood and brick exteriors; patterned brickwork; steeply-pitched roofs: cross timbering; tall, multi-paned windows; patterned roofing materials; leaded-glass windows; vestibules.

Presented by: Doris Smith, Historic Preservationist; Ron Gay, Builder - Consultant; Louis DiForte, Architect

**New Feature
The County Store**



We have initiated a classified Ad Column in the GAZETTE. If you have items or services of a historic nature that you wish to advertise, please consider the OAKLAND GAZETTE as a marketing tool, with its county-wide 600 subscribers --

MICHIGAN STATE FAIR!

August 25 - September 5, 1994

Visit the *Country Life Historic Park* sponsored by MSU. Fairgoers may observe and participate in agricultural and home life processes of Michigan's past, a unique collaboration of Michigan museums and historical groups with agricultural interests. Its sure to intrigue the visitor with our past and increase awareness and knowledge about argiculture. Great for our "Junior Farmers."

WE NEED YOUR TALENTS:

Our Society needs volunteers to work as gardeners, clerks, guides.
Call Charlie Martinez at (810) 338-6732

YOUR AD HERE

OFFICERS - 1994

President	Gretchen Adler
1st V.P.	Clarke Kimball
2nd V.P.	Jack Moore
Secretary	Miriam Foxman
Treasurer	Dan Carmichael
Resident Agent	Ed Adler

EDITORIAL STAFF

Pauline Harrison, Editor
Charles Martinez, Assoc. Editor
Ross Callaway, Assoc. Editor

THOSE INVISIBLE HEROES

By Charles H. Martinez



While the 50th anniversary of D-Day with its poignant scenes of the American Cemetery at Saint Laurent-Sur-Mer captured national attention, many of our heroes from earlier wars rested in graves at home unnoticed and undecorated.

One local example was sergeant Philo Durkee of the 22nd Michigan, who died defending his flag at the Battle of Chickamauga during the Civil War. Durkee was one of approximately 1,000,000 men from the North and South who gave their lives in the most bloody conflict this country has ever fought. The family monument in Oak Hill Cemetery, Pontiac bears no epitaph commemorating his courage in the face of enemy fire 131 years ago this September.

Like so many who served in the Civil War, Philo Durkee was a farmer's son. His father, Jedediah, was born in Williamstown, Orange County, Vermont on October 25, 1800. His grandfather, William, together with Jedediah and the latter's brother, Erastus, later moved to the State of New York and then on to Michigan where in 1829 and 1830 they purchased property in West Bloomfield and Bloomfield townships. Jedediah's land, some 120 acres in 1857, laid southeast of Pine Lake on either side of present-day Middlebelt Road in section 13 of West Bloomfield. In his "Reminiscences from an Old Pioneer" told to this Society shortly after its founding in 1874, Jedediah Durkee spoke of the hardships faced by the first settlers:

I built a log house, and to aid those who had no dwelling, I took about twenty new-comers in the one new house. To pay expenses I used to go four or five miles a day to work, and had one dollar per day with oxen, and fifty cents for self. I wanted then as ever since, to keep out of debt.

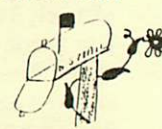
It was this work ethic and compassion for his fellowman that Jedediah had instilled in his son, Philo. With the formation of the 22nd Michigan Infantry Regiment, Philo Durkee enlisted in Company A for three years as a corporal on August 9, 1862 at Farmington. Until the Battle of Chickamauga, his service record was unremarkable except for a period of unspecified illness between mid-August and

the end of October in 1862, and his promotion to sergeant on January 31, 1863. This was to change dramatically for Durkee and the 22nd Michigan near a small Georgia creek some 12 miles south of Chattanooga. There on September 20, 1863 the regiment, positioned along Horseshoe Ridge, fought desperately for three hours until their ammunition was exhausted. Then with fixed bayonets they heroically charged the enemy whose overwhelming numbers enveloped the Michigan unit. At dusk they were forced to surrender. This gallant rearguard action helped Union General George H. Thomas win the sobriquet "Rock of Chickamauga" and the eventual rank of commander of the Army of the Cumberland.

Durkee served as Color Sergeant, one of a select group of noncommissioned officers assigned the duty of carrying and guarding the regiment's flag. He died early in the battle, cut down by grape shot. When hit, Durkee instinctively grabbed the folds of the flag staining it with his blood as he fell. Several others of the 22nd were killed or wounded that day attempting to carry the banner through the battle.

Selection for such duty was considered a distinct honor and privilege but was also tantamount to a death sentence. At the Battle of Gettysburg, the 24th Michigan lost nine color-bearers to Confederate fire. Nonetheless, this act of showing the flag was crucial because it served as a rallying point, boosted morale, and made it easier to spot the unit's position in the smoke of battle.

Thousands of miles away from Horseshoe Ridge in Georgia, but not far from the beaches of Normandy stands a heroic statue entitled "The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves." Around its pedestal are inscribed the opening words of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," a Civil War lyric that Philo Durkee probably sang as his regiment marched into Georgia. On the pedestal above, the figure of American youth stretches forth its arms to embrace the Norman sky and all the souls of American servicemen who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.



Dear Mr. Martinez

I came home from work last Friday, sat down on the couch and turned on the TV and you were there! I didn't think I knew any movie stars. That was really a nice little piece on the Victorian Christmas. You guys are like a diamond in the rough and it was nice to see a positive story coming out of the Pontiac area.

Gary Jenkin, (Your) Xerox Account Executive

Dear Mr. Martinez,

We were all delighted with our visit at Pine Grove on Saturday. The whole day was an exceptional one and will be long remembered and talked about. The advanced check covers the admission for our group of fifteen who were present for the tour. The enclosed check is our appreciation check for your service to our Chapter. History seems to be active in Pontiac so no doubt you will see a few of us again.

Many thanks,
Dean Smith, The Victorian Society in America,
Michigan Chapter

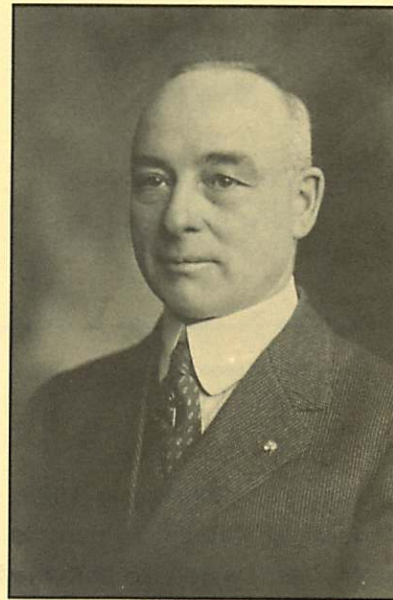
JOSEPH LEO MARCERO AN EARLY PONTIAC ENTREPRENEUR

By

Donald C. O'Brien

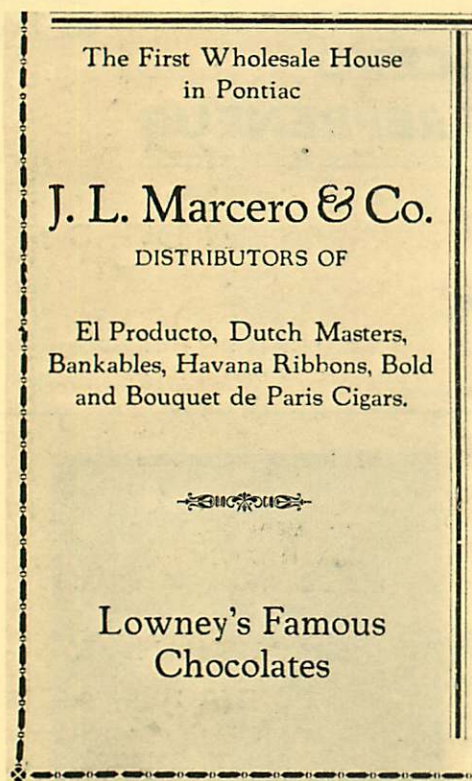
At the turn of the twentieth century, Pontiac was a quaint community of nearly 10,000 inhabitants. These people lived on outlying farms or along the banks of the Clinton River, the artery connecting the many lakes of Oakland County, before meandering through the downtown business area of Pontiac on its way to Lake St. Clair. Already over eighty years old, the city had survived the economic doldrums experienced by many urban areas during the post-Civil War era and had emerged with a thriving carriage industry which supported three-fourths of the city's population. Pontiac was also the county seat which brought many people on legal business to the courthouse. It boasted of a recently founded newspaper, the *Pontiac Gazette*, which was the forerunner of the *Oakland Press*. Only a few years earlier, the city had been connected with Detroit and other parts of the county and state through the Interurban; now folks could travel easily and safely by the electric train's efficient service. The Grand Trunk Railway was another link hauling locally made buggies, farm products, and travellers heading for more remote destinations.

Around this time, the potential of producing the internal combustion engine was generating much excitement. Henry Ford had successfully built a gasoline buggy in 1896 and the feat was duplicated in Pontiac four years later when Martin Halfpenny, a local carriage maker, built a self-propelled vehicle. Thus it was inevitable that Pontiac, with a good supply of craftsmen and numerous carriage factories, should vie for a piece of this newly rising industry. Gradually it made the conversion to the production of automobiles and the city was well on its way to becoming a great manufacturing center when General Motors, ultimately its most important employer, was founded in 1908.



Joseph L. Marcero, Age 55 (1924)
When he was at the height of his career.

Hence, Pontiac was a thriving center with enormous potential for any young businessman when Joseph Leo Marcero arrived in the winter of 1900. He had left a secure position in Detroit to open a billiards and pool room in downtown Pontiac at One North Saginaw Street. Quickly he added a tobacco and candy business and, from the beginning, he expected to sell these items to other retail outlets. He hired a salesman to call on neighborhood stores while he stayed in the office and managed the pool room. He named his new enterprise J. L. Marcero & Company and one of his first advertisements, promoting Lowney's Chocolates and several cigar brands, claimed that his business was "The first wholesale house in Pontiac."



Advertisement, c. 1910

Born in New Baltimore, Michigan in 1869, he was the second of twelve children. His parents, Peter and Elizabeth Rose Marcero, were also born in Michigan, but their ancestors had migrated here from Canada. His father, a Civil War veteran, was a sailor on the Great Lakes and eventually became a captain of several vessels. Money earned from these lake voyages enabled the senior Marcero to buy a farm in Anchorville when Joseph was only six months old. There the young Marcero would spend his childhood, doing his share of the farm chores, while his father was away on the lakes.

A few other facts of Marcero's childhood are revealed in a diary which he began in 1889 at age 20. He disclosed that he suffered from "Brain fever at 6 months" and "scarlet fever at 3 1/2 years." At eight, he was kicked by a horse and "While out boating on Lake St. Clair (about 1882) ... had [a] narrow escape from drowning." He also noted attending both public and Catholic schools between 1877 and 1885; and at the most, he started his career with slightly less than an eighth grade education.

In May 1886, Marcero had just turned seventeen when he began working for the Fairhaven Stave Company. He started as an apprentice in the company's store selling dry goods, groceries, hardware and lumber. In less than a year, he moved to Detroit where he found employment in a grocery store at \$12.00 per month plus board. Marcero took advantage of his spare time in Detroit by completing a three month night course at the Detroit Business University.

Marcero may have left the Fairhaven Stave Company with their approval, because he returned to the company shortly after completing his business course. Now he worked in the office during the warm season for \$7.50 per week - a sizable increase in pay. Then he was "Employed in the winter to work at store and scale and tally timber in Canada, [and in] Jan. 1889, [he] received [an] increase in salary to \$9.00 per week." Undoubtedly, the increase was compensation for room and board while away from home.

His big break came in September 1900 when Daniel Scotten and Company, a Detroit manufacturer of tobacco products, hired him for an office job at \$10.00 per week. Marcero would spend the next four years there earning periodic raises while learning the tobacco business. At the same time, he did not ignore the amenities of city life. He attended the theater often noting in his diary seeing such great 19th century performers as Sarah Bernhardt in "Joan D'Arc" and Robert Downing in his role as Othello. He also enjoyed lectures on philosophy given by a Detroit priest.

All his life he had an insatiable urge to travel and this passion undoubtedly began at an early age. He mentioned several interurban trips to such places as Milford and Lexington, Michigan before taking an excursion to Put-in-Bay on Lake Erie. While on the island, he enjoyed visiting Perry's Cave and the museum. Then in 1892 he took a week's sojourn to Niagara Falls where he hired a carriage to view the falls before taking a ride on the *Maid of the Mist* to get a closer look. A year later, he travelled by rail and ferry across Lake Michigan to the World's Fair in Chicago.

Scotten and Company broadened Marcero's experience when, in 1894, they promoted him to salesman and sent him on the road selling their products. His territory was western Pennsylvania and he worked there for two years. He returned to Scotten's Detroit office probably voluntarily,

because sometime during his employment he had been attracted to a young Scotten secretary, Frances M. Thompson. A courtship developed after his return from Pennsylvania. The young couple became engaged sometime in late 1896 and they were married in September 1897.

Marcero's early years in Pontiac were devoted to building his business, but he did not neglect his family. By October 1900, he had brought his wife and daughter from Detroit and they rented a home on nearby Mill Street. In 1907, he bought a lot on Whittemore Street close to St. Vincent DePaul Church where he was a parishoner and, in the same year, he had a house built there. Several years later, they had another home built across the street on the corner of Whittemore and Center Streets where the family resided for nearly four decades.

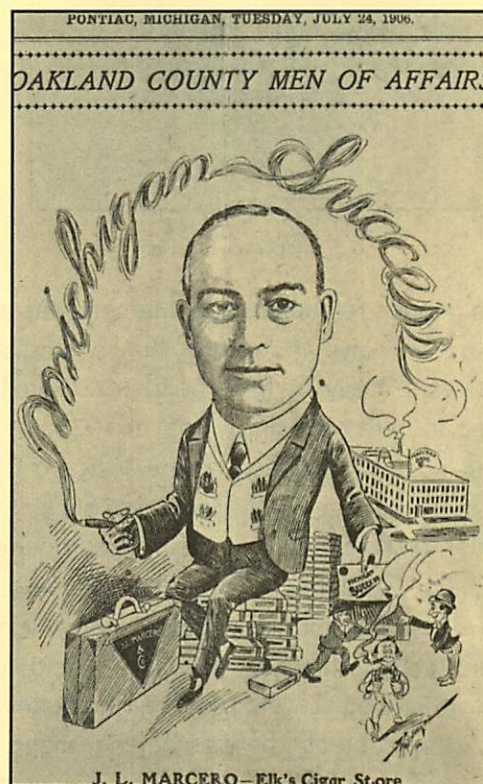
In 1905, he opened a factory in Detroit, with his brother William, to manufacture cigars; that same year he travelled to St. Louis to attend the World's Fair. Marcero's Pontiac wholesale business was so successful that he expanded this operation to Detroit in 1909. The move proved so lucrative that he eventually bought his own warehouse in 1920 and he maintained an office there until 1926; this was less than a year after he had built his own building in Pontiac at 44 North Perry Street [torn down in 1993].

Marcero had quickly risen in the business world and was known throughout the community as "Joe." He gradually phased out the pool room, but kept a retail outlet, the Elk Cigar Store, as well as his wholesale business. His reputation as an honest and hard working businessman earned him the title of one of the "Oakland County Men of Affairs." His caricature appeared in the Pontiac Gazette, July 24th 1906, portraying him sitting on cigar boxes while holding an open box labeled "Michigan Success."

Although Marcero's business ventures demanded much of his time, he still managed to raise a family of two girls and two boys while, at the same time, actively participating in community affairs. His wife developed arthritis at an early age and needed continual care. Also, his oldest daughter and son endured active tuberculosis periodically and were forced to be hospitalized. In a letter to his sons, we get a glimpse of his character as he encouraged them to improve themselves both educationally and morally. He concluded, "Pleasure is momentary, happiness is lasting. Let's work to

be happy. Tis not necessary to wear a long face and be pious to be happy - give me a guy that takes his medicine with a smile on his face and carries on."

Historians have labeled this period in American history the Progressive Era, because it was a time of drastic change through reforms in government, education, and social values. The principles of hard work, sobriety, independence, and industriousness were also encouraged especially by the Republican Party. And one



can see in Marcero's way of life a classic representative of his age. He was a good Republican and most important, he was always available and willing to contribute his time and business expertise to help his community.

During these years, for example, Marcero was a member of the Pontiac Board of Commerce and served as its president in 1913-1914. He employed blacks and perhaps in his capacity as the Board of Commerce president, he encouraged other small businessmen to do the same. In 1916, he was appointed vice-president of the committee in charge of planning for the city's centennial. This occasion was to celebrate the first white men entering what was to become the city of Pontiac. Marcero and his colleagues planned a week of activities which included a circus and

parade. Surviving are several pictures of the floats including Marcero's own vehicle made up as a huge Dutch shoe [representing Dutch Master cigars] with purple and yellow garnishments.



J.L. Marcero & Co. Building c. 1975.
Photo courtesy of Rita Marcero

Owing to his cigar business in Detroit, he was on that city's board of trade also and he took his membership seriously. In speaking of this organization's value, Marcero stated in *The Detroit Magazine*, IV, (1914): "In doing this work it is not necessary to bury one's own interests but on the contrary, the logic that, what is good for the public is doubly good for me appeals to every man, irrespective of what his calling in life may be. The value of membership in a commercial organization is an asset which no man should minimize."

Later Marcero served on the Pontiac commission of 1919 which redrafted the city charter. Nine men, including Marcero, met and deliberated for nine months before they recommended the progressive measure of establishing the city manager form of government. In the meantime, he was a director of the local Pontiac Commercial and Savings Bank, a member of the Oakland County Board of

Supervisors, and was continually active in the local service bureau and Rotary club.

Nor did Marcero neglect religious obligations. He was always an active member of St. Vincent DePaul Church. His income tax records reveal that he supported his parish financially more than could have been expected of him and he was a liberal contributor to other Catholic charities as well. He was a charter member of the Pontiac Knights of Columbus and was the financial secretary of the city's Catholic Mutual Benevolent Association. Later in his life, he also served as a vice-president of the Detroit Diocesan Union of the Holy Name Society, a group interested in the formation and activities of Catholic youth.

The 1920's were rewarding years for Marcero; he was in the prime of his life; his businesses were lucrative; and he continued to travel. Summer 1921 found Marcero feeding his passion for travel by taking his family "motoring" through New York, New England, Quebec and Montreal before returning via Ontario. He revealed in his diary that they had a slight accident near Utica, New York but no one was injured and they were able to continue after some minor repairs were completed on the car. In twenty-six days, they covered a distance of 2600 miles - at the time an incredible test of endurance - over roads that were usually simply dirt trails and sometimes practically impassable.

The eastern sojourn did not hinder his desire to travel, because he was touring the American southwest later that same year. Marcero would continue to make annual pleasure trips west to Colorado, but his eastern trips were usually for business reasons or for tobacco and candy conventions. However, his unrelenting interest in travelling is astonishing considering his daily business routine kept him continually on the road.

Marcero's children were now reaching adulthood. His older daughter, Ellen, had entered the Immaculate Heart of Mary order of sisters in Monroe and was teaching music. At the same time, his older son, Thompson, was studying for the priesthood in Denver, Colorado while his other daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was away at boarding school in Kalamazoo. His younger son, Joseph, started his career in his father's Detroit office before securing a position with the W. M. Lowney Company in Boston.

Although he had a bustling business and family life



Letterhead, c. 1920

during these years, Marcero never neglected community affairs. In 1923, he was appointed to the Oakland County Hospital Association as one of a fifteen member committee. It was the work of these individuals that brought a group of Mercy nuns from Ann Arbor to found St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Another interest was the Pontiac Civic Music Association and Marcero served as its president in 1929-1930.

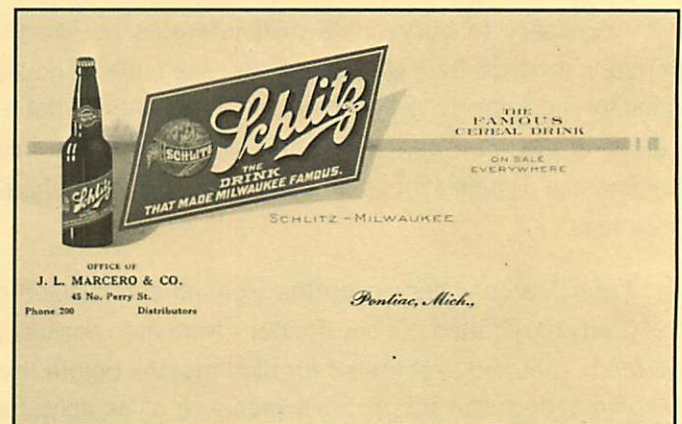
Marcero was an astute student of economic trends. He proved his business acumen in 1928 when he published a three page pamphlet on the blatant misuse of credit. In it he urged his customers to eliminate unnecessary credit and operate on a cash and carry basis. Perhaps he anticipated the Depression, but his public reasoning at the time was that the corner store had to adapt to chain store tactics - "Quick turnover, no bad accounts, smaller gross profits, more business," or face demise. Putting this policy into practice, Marcero broke ground on October 18, 1929 for a cash and carry building, just eleven days before the stock market crash on Wall Street.

Although the financial outlook was precarious in 1929, Marcero had a profitable year. His son, Joseph, had returned from Boston and was now active in the company; with a family member now in the office, Marcero felt secure enough to leave the business and take his wife on an extended winter western trip. That following summer they took a three month grand tour of Europe where they had an audience with Pope Pius XI and attended the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany.

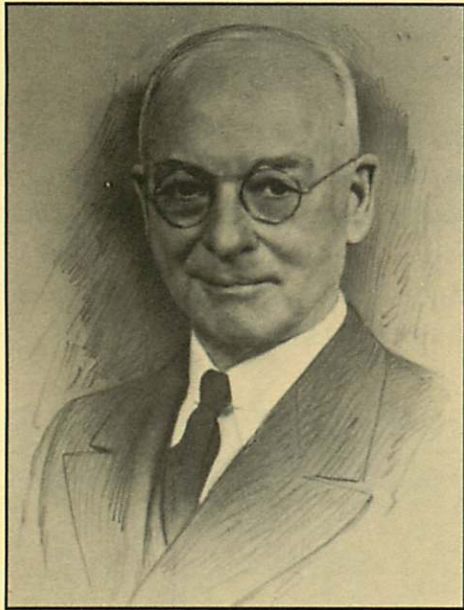
1931 was a year of joy and tribulation for the Marcero family. Their son Thompson was elevated to the priesthood on May 31st; two weeks later, the Pontiac Commercial and Savings Bank closed its doors, the same bank that Marcero had served for years on its board of directors and had been a stock holder. The accounts of J. L. Marcero and Company were frozen and ultimately lost; thus it became virtually impossible for the company to pay its bills.

Somehow the company limped along for another two years before it was finally forced into receivership. Marcero, a firm believer in the free enterprise system, had been his own boss for over thirty years. He had been honest and forthright in his business dealings and had always paid his bills whenever due. Now he was a victim of the vicissitudes of the times; through no fault of his own, he lost a lifetime's financial achievement to the great Depression.

In losing his livelihood, he was forced to look for employment elsewhere. He salvaged it through one of the many programs of the New Deal. Marcero secured an appointment as chief examiner of mortgages for the Federal Housing Administration of Detroit, an institution whose goal was to alleviate the suffering caused by that same Depression. This was a position that he held for the rest of his life.



Letterhead, c. 1930



J.L. Marcero, c. 1938

Although nearing retirement age, Marcero was not ready or willing to slow down; if anything, his pace quickened in his twilight years. Daily, he rode the train to Detroit; nightly, he returned to help his ailing wife. In 1935, he saw his defunct business reorganized as the Marcero Cigar and Candy Company under the leadership of his son, Joseph. His daughter, Mary Elizabeth, joined the company in 1946 and later his only grandson, Thomas L. Marcero, entered the firm. He also saw the business prosper which led him to comment the following year: "Business holds up pretty well - factories are busy - and profits a little better - hope it keeps up." Undoubtedly, he was hoping, along with the rest of the country, that the Great Depression was nearing its end.

Joseph Leo Marcero would not live to see economic prosperity again. He died on Thanksgiving Day, 1938 after a short illness. The family received many tributes including a resolution in tribute of his memory passed by the Oakland County Board of Supervisors. The most touching came from a James Giblin of Detroit who wrote, "J. L. Marcero was fearlessly honest, a gentleman, and above all a veritable saint in this so called world of business. He was my friend." Undoubtedly, he was a gentleman and friend to the many people who he met during nearly four decades of service to his adopted city - Pontiac.



The Marcero home, c. 1920. 124 Whittmore Street, Pontiac



Marcero Cigar & Candy Co., c. 1938 97 N. Cass Avenue, Pontiac

Mr. O'Brien edits a newsletter for the American Historical Print Collectors Society; he is also an adjunct faculty member in the Social Science Department at Oakland Community College. Auburn Hills, Michigan. His wife, Mary Catherine, is the granddaughter of Joseph Leo Marcero.

This aritcal was written from extensive records in the family's possession as well as materal from the library of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, Pontiac, Michigan.