

GAZETTE

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Fall 1999

EXPANSION OF THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

The construction on the addition of the Carriage House is coming along very well. Prior to installation of the new roof, it was determined that there were several leaks in the 27-year old roof covering the original building. Consequently, a decision was made to put on a new roof on the entire building. The cupola was torn down, as many of the slats were missing or damaged, and some of the wood was rotting. Photographs of the original cupola were located, and a new cupola is being constructed by carpenters, and will be placed on top of the roof by a crane.

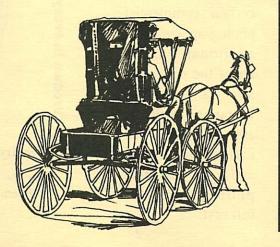
The new addition is a two-story addition. The ground floor will be used to expand the research library, and provide a reading room for patrons that can also be used as a meeting room. This room will be located in the front of the building, and will also be a showcase for Judge Lynch's desk and some of the Dawson-Brown furniture. Rotating exhibits of the Society's collection will be displayed.

The new addition has a cathedral ceiling with five skylights. The skylights contain UV filter glass which is used to help keep sunlight from deteriorating manuscripts and historical materials. The library shelving, desks and work tables for the librarians will be moved into the new addition. We will also bring the oak and glass-paneled book cases from the upstairs of the house into the library to be used for additional storage of research materials. There will be plenty of wall space to display

mounted maps or atlases, and many of our framed historical photographs.

The addition also has a second room which will be used for a variety of purposes. A desk and work tables for patrons and volunteers will be placed in this room. We hope to obtain another computer for patron use, and we have a microfilm reader that can also be used. When meetings are held in the Reading Room, this room can be used for research by patrons. It can also be utilized for committee meetings and volunteer workspace.

The addition has a lower level, which is currently unfinished, although it has electrical and insulation. There is a furnace room which will allow for the entire Carriage House to be temperature and humidity controlled to help preserve our materials. This portion of the addition will be used to house the boxed manuscripts, photographs, and additional research material such as bound volumes of newspapers. A dumb waiter will be installed to allow for easy transport of the heavier items up to the ground floor.



Letter from the President

Mike Willis

Greetings fellow members - you must be wondering why you have not received a Gazette this year! As many of you are aware, this has been a very hectic year with all of the new developments, so I would like first to bring you up to date. probably know by now, we have finally realized our dream of constructing a new research library. The new addition to the Carriage House is about 75% complete and we anticipate being able to move into it by late October 1999. We have also completed renovation of the rear part of the Wisner house, and opened our new "Country Store" gift shop. We have a new and expanded line of gift items and crafts thanks to our Gift Shop Committee, chaired by Susan Metzdorf. The grounds have never looked better thanks to Gale Scafe and Clarke Kimball, and the additional help of W.A.M. volunteers recommended by members Mike and Ellen Zehnder.

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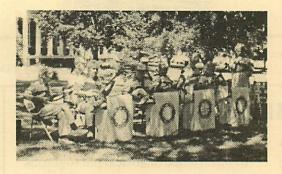
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1999 Ice Cream Social

This year's annual Ice Cream Social was another successful event, led by chairperson Pauline Harrison. After a very hot summer, Mother Nature was kind enough to provide us with perfect weather and a turn-out of 343 attendees. Numerous volunteers worked for many weeks planning and preparing for this annual event. Once again, WAM workers contributed by cleaning and preparing the buildings and the grounds.

President Mike Willis worked very hard to remodel the kitchen of the house, and the new Gift Shop,





located in the house, was open for the first time, while tour guides dressed in costume were available in the house throughout the afternoon to answer questions. The schoolhouse was home to the used book sale, where Faye Donelson worked tirelessly, and a display of Currier and Ives prints hung in the front entrance.

The front lawn boasted a line-up of vintage cars which were a great draw, particularly for visitors driving by. The White Elephant Tent brought in a larger profit than any other year, over \$700, thanks to the many generous donations and

hard work by volunteers. Two of the "show stoppers" this year were the musical group called "The Ban Joes" who provided lively entertainment in the grove all afternoon, and the Oakland County mounted sheriffs that rode around the grounds.

It would be impossible to list here all the of the many volunteers who helped to make the Ice Cream Social a wonderful event again this year, so we thank everyone for their hard work before, during and after!



Library News and Views

From the Director

The research library is expanding, not only spatially, but also in our ability to serve you better and more efficiently. Our current focus is on collections management, which means that we are organizing, arranging, describing and preserving the collections to make them accessible for researchers. We have recently purchased PastPerfect museum software, which is a database cataloging software. This will enable us to eventually catalog all of the holdings of the Society, from artifacts to manuscripts. We are beginning by entering our photograph collection of over 2000 unframed images into the database. When we are finished, we will provide a finding aid to the collection, describing subject areas and surnames covered, the inclusive dates, biographical information about certain commercial photographers, and additonal notes about the collection whole. Librarians will be able to search the catalog for you to assist in locating photographs interest.

H. H. HARRIS, A MAGNIFICENT SPECIMEN BOOM.



A Visit Desired. Saginaw st., cor. Auburn ave.

From the Directory for the Cities of Flint and Pontiac, Michigan for 1870-71, p. 26.

Art Product in every Style a Speciality

Committee Reports

Gardens and Grounds Committee

The grounds around the Wisner House looked as lovely as ever this Clarke Kimball and his vear. faithful assistant Marion, planted, weeded and watered even through the hot summer season. Clarke has decided that next years' gardens will have a greater display of perennials, many of which came from member Rosemary Gallardo's fabulous garden. Clarke was assisted by WAM workers who have helped with the planting, weeding, pruning and cleaning the grounds for the Ice Cream Social. Gale Scafe and Ed Ling have kept the grass mowed since spring, a job now made easier by the purchase of a new and wider mower. The mowing of the grounds also includes the lot used as a parking area during our events.

Oral History Committee

The Oral History Collection includes tapes and transcripts of many of Oakland County's residents. We are presently looking to interview others who can give us background on the history of the county and its residents. We are also looking for interviews on the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oakland County. Elizabeth Rose is currently gathering information on the role that the Clinton River played in early churches as a baptismal site. Member Bob Reynells was recently interviewed and David Hackett is scheduled to be interviewed soon.

The Oral History Collection will also be moved to the new addition of the Carriage House. From a preservation point of view, the temperature and humidity controlled environment will be a much better location for this collection.

Guide Committee

The history of the 150 year-old Wisner House has made it a favorite field trip destination for school children, teachers and parents for years. Tours are a great fund-raising activity for the Society as well as an interesting and educational experience for our visitors. Volunteers conduct tours lasting about 1 hours, and include the Mansion, the Summer Kitchen, the Pioneer Museum and the former Plains Drayton one-room schoolhouse. We have already begun to book school tours for this fall. Tours are currently by appointment only, however plans are being made to be open on Saturdays from 10am-2pm after the first of the year.

Manuscript Committee

Virginia Clohset has been inventorying the Frank J. Malcolm Collection. The collection consists primarily of land contracts with the schedule of payments, however, we also received additional copies of Durant's 1877 History of Oakland County and Beer's 1872 Atlas of Oakland County. It will be very helpful to have all of the manscripts a temperature-controlled environment and one which is located so close to the library! We anticipate that usage of the manuscripts collection will increase once the collection has been relocated to the new addition.

Library Committee

For the past year and a half, the primary focus of the Library Committee has been the moving of the library from the first floor of the Wisner House to the Carriage

House. Phase One was the preparation of the Carriage House and the moving of all materials on the first floor of the "old" library. WAM assisted several times with packing the materials, moving them to the carriage house, unpacking and shelving. The Library was reopened by its target date of November 2, 1998. Now that the Carriage House construction is nearing completion, the Library Committee has been meeting to discuss the relocation of the current library area into the new addition, as well as moving the remainder of the materials currently stored in the upstairs of the house. Financial support for the "new" library has been provided in part from the Dawson Brown Fund, the Library Fund, and other donations under the guidance of Dan Carmichael, Mike Willis and Katherine Daggy.

Vintage Clothing Committee

The committee has been busy accessioning new items and organizing the collection. On Thursday, Sept. 16, chairperson Pauline Harrison gave a presentation at the Milford Township Library on Victorian attire.



Holding a True Course: Brief Biography of Hervey Parke

by Andy Koziol

A prominent surveyor during Michigan's Territorial period, Hervey Parke made several tours of Michigan's lower peninsula, running county and township lines, as well as subdividing lands in order to make them available for sale to prospective settlers. His expeditions took him in all directions, but they always brought him back to his adopted home of Pontiac, where he resided for nearly seventy years. The Society has in its possession one of Mr. Parke's compasses, along with several examples of his work as a surveyor.

Parke was born in Middle Haddam, Connecticut, on 14 April 1790. He learned surveying at the behest of his father who, despite being a former sea captain, opposed young Hervey's desire to study navigation. Parke moved to Camden, Oneida County, New York, at the age of eighteen to finish his education and find work in the field. It was there that he married Mercy Bronson, also a Connecticut native. The couple purchased a farm and Hervey found employment as a teacher during the winter seasons.

Parke's decision to move his wife and young daughter to the Michigan Territory in order to find work as a surveyor was impulsive, to say the "In February 1821, while least. returning to my home one evening from the school," he later wrote, "the thought of going to Michigan and engaging in government land surveying first occurred to my mind, and in a few minutes I decided I would go."3 Although his wife supported the decision, Parke's friends were almost unanimous in their disapproval. Little was known of Michigan at the time. Surveys conducted in 1815 concluded that the land in the territory was so infested with swamps and marshes that hardly one acre in a hundred was fit for cultivation of any kind.4 Parke said he was unaware of these dubious

findings, but admitted that one friend had been told that the soil in Michigan was so poor that one could not even raise potatoes.⁵

Undeterred, Hervey prepared for his journey by procuring letters of introduction to Governor Lewis Cass from, among others, New York Governor DeWitt Clinton. He and two friends began the 500 mile walk through Canada to Detroit on 21 March 1821. They reached the Detroit



River sixteen days later and traveled to the city by rowboat. After his arrival, Parke traveled to present day Birmingham where he met a surveyor named Horatio Ball. Ball had been issued a contract to subdivide ten townships north of Flint, between the Flint and Cass rivers, and he asked Hervey to assist him. Parke accepted, thus beginning his career surveying the Michigan Territory.

Parke's first Michigan expedition, begun on 13 June 1821, was not able to begin in earnest until October. The surveying team assigned to outline the townships that Parke and Ball's crew was to subdivide had been chased

from the field by incessant swarms of mosquitoes. When Ball and Parke returned to the field that fall, they found the weather cold and their provisions inadequate. The dough for their bread, wrapped in their tarpaulin, was devoured by hogs. The tarpaulin was shredded, depriving the group of their main source of shelter. Reduced to a diet of buggy peas, they were helped at one time by an Indian woman who offered to share some succotash she was preparing. Completing their survey on the final day of 1821, they were so famished upon their arrival at a Flint-area trading-house that they ate potatoes half-boiled.6 After returning to Pontiac, Hervey accompanied Horatio Ball on his journey to Chillicothe, Ohio to make his returns to the office of the Surveyor General for the territory. While in Michigan, Parke had visited Governor Cass and received a recommendation on the basis that he planned to settle in the area permanently.7 The office promised Parke future assignments, allowing him to return to New York immediately to begin the work of moving his family to their new home. Parke returned to his home in New York on 14 February 1822.

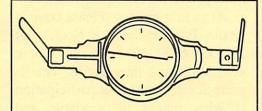
The Parkes left Camden, New York in May 1822 and journeyed to Buffalo, where they traveled by steamship to Detroit. After their arrival they stayed in a building on the property of John Hunter, the man with whom Hervey stayed during his first visit the year previous. In October of that year Hervey's brother, Dr. Ezra Parke, along with his wife and daughter, arrived in the area. While the doctor embarked immediately upon a successful practice, Hervey was unable to find work surveying during the summer and fall months. However, in February 1823, Parke received a letter from the surveyor John Mullett asking Hervey to accompany him to Chillicothe to receive his promised contract.

Over the course of the next five years, Parke conducted numerous surveys across the southern lower peninsula. 1823 saw him fulfill two contracts; the first in Livingston county south of Fenton, and the second along the River Raisin between Tecumseh and Adrian, in Lenawee county. In 1825, he subdivided an area twenty miles east of Battle Creek and the following year, subdivided six townships in Clinton county, between the southern shore of the Lookingglass river and northern boundary of Lansing.

The Parkes' home life underwent significant changes during these years. In the fall of 1823, Hervey purchased a parcel of land in Pontiac and began construction on a new home. That same year his wife gave birth to a son, John. The couple's second child, a daughter, was born toward the end of 1826. Hervey, conducting his survey of the Lookingglass at the time, did not see her until she was six weeks old.8 The family of Dr. Ezra Parke was also growing. On 13 December 1827, Ezra's wife gave birth to a son whom the doctor decided to name in his brother's honor.9 Hervey C. Parke would later go on to found the Parke-Davis pharmaceutical company, an institution in the Detroit area for over a century.

Meanwhile, the career of Hervey Parke, surveyor, continued well into the 1830s. In late 1829, his was among three surveying parties that began the arduous task of subdividing the area between the Tittawabassee and Kawkawlin rivers in Midland and Bay counties. Knee-deep snow and gusty winds hindered progress from the first day. Parke himself suffered from severe frostbite, the result of too often being forced to wade through ice-cold water.10 However, when his fellow surveyors lost heart and returned home shortly after the tour resumed in autumn 1830, Parke completed their work.

The strain of surveying soon began to challenge Hervey's endurance. In a letter to the Surveyor General in 1832 he remarked: "since my Saginaw tours, I find I cannot endure fatigue as formerly." Surveyors faced many hardships. Aside from the unpredictable nature of Michigan weather, they walked many miles over difficult terrain, often on an empty stomach. Parke's standard breakfast included only fried or boiled pork, occasionally with shortcakes and tea.



Compass brought from Connecticut to the territory of Michigan 1818, by Captain Hervey Parke and used by him in all his work surveying that part of Illinois where Chicago now stands, the northern part of Ohio and eastern part of Michigan in the counties of Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac and Lapeer. Presented by Hervey J. Parke, grandson. Illustration by Teresa C. Ehinger. Property of Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society.

Any leftover pork was carried in pockets so that it could be eaten cold while on the march. During winter, the cold pork would be eaten with bread so frozen it had to be sliced with axes. Supper, prepared at night after returning to camp, consisted of tea and bean soup consumed, as Parke said, "with great relish." ¹²

Despite his fatigue, Parke accepted an assignment to tour the thumb area of the lower peninsula between Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay. It was the most difficult assignment of his career. A survey of the area had been initiated in 1822, but the treacherous nature of the swamps in the area resulted in an indefinite delay. Parke, again with two other surveyors, tramped into the marshes for the first time on New Year's Day 1834; the work would consume him for over two years.

Twice his work was delayed, and when it could proceed, it went slowly. In a letter to the Surveyor General explaining his delays, Parke reported finding nearly three feet of soft, melting snow atop the already deep mud.13 Such terrain rendered packhorses useless, forcing the members of the party to carry their own provisions through the marshes. They were often forced to lay poles upon boughs of hemlock so as to keep out of the water while sleeping.14 Having twice returned prematurely, Parke set out on his third trip to the area in autumn of 1834. This time he found the area passable; the water having receded from springtime levels. This was fortunate, for his colleagues, Messrs. Thomas and Christian, of Ohio, had abandoned their work and refused to return, reporting to the Surveyor that the General area was uninhabitable.15 Parke completed his work and theirs, returning to Pontiac in February 1836. He is credited with running all of the township and most of the subdivision lines in the thumb between the Black River and Point Aux Barques.16

Following his work in the thumb, Hervey accepted two assignments subdividing in Iowa. Aside from some work done in Wisconsin in 1832, they were his only surveys conducted outside of Michigan. The Iowa trips occupied him from Autumn 1836 until the end of February 1838. Although he worked once more, leading an areasurvey of Salem township, Washtenaw County, in 1844, the Iowa trip marked the end of Hervey Parke's career as a government surveyor. Over the course of his numerous expeditions he surveyed an area he estimated to be three times the size of Oakland County.17 The tens of thousands of miles he spent trudging through all kinds of wilderness in every kind of weather finally began to take its toll. He suffered from paralysis late in life, spending his final years in the care of his daughter and son-in-law. Despite

Hervey Parke

continued from page 5

his weakened condition, he succeeded in composing two written reminiscences of his life as a surveyor, which were read before the Oakland County Pioneer Society in 1874 and 1876. A resident of Pontiac ever since his arrival in Michigan, he died on 3 October 1879 at the age of 89 and was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery.

About the Author: Andy Koziol graduated from Michigan State University in May 1999 with a degree in History. He currently spends his time in East Lansing, and in Redford Township, Wayne County.

Footnotes

- ¹ Hervey Parke, "Reminiscences." Pioneer Collections: Report of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan, Together with the Reports of County, Town, and District Pioneer Societies, Vol. 3. (Lansing: W.S. George and Co., 1881), 285.
- ² Chapman Brothers, *Portrait and Biographical Album of Oakland County, Michigan.* (Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1891), 285.
- ³ Parke, 572.
- ⁴ Alan S. Brown, "Mr. Tiffin's Surveyors Come to Michigan." *Michigan History Magazine, Vol.* 74, No. 5. (September/October 1990), 36.
- ⁵ Parke, 572-573.
- ⁶ Parke, 576.
- 7 Ibid.
- ⁸ Parke, 582.
- Walter Buell, "Hervey C. Parke." Magazine of Western History Vol. 4, No. 5. (Sept. 1886), 654.
 Parke, 583.
- Hervey Parke, letter to Surveyor General Micajah T. Williams, 19 Sept. 1832. (Clerance Edwin Carter, ed.) *The Territorial Papers of the United States Volume 12: The Territory of Michigan 1829-1837.* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1945), 527.
- 12 Parke, 590.
- ¹³ Hervey Parke, letter to Micajah T. Williams, Surveyor General, 3 Feb 1834. *Territorial Papers Vol. 12*, 722.

Board of Directors

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Vice President

Annalee Kennedy

2nd Vice President

Clarke Kimball

Treasurer

Dan Carmichael

Secretary

- ¹⁴ Parke, 587.
- 15 Chapman Bros., 287.
- 16 Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Parke, 590.

Pioneer Museum

Don't forget to visit the Pioneer Museum, which boasts a wonderful collection of 19th and early 20th century tools and implements. The museum is located in the lower level of the Carriage House and is open Tues-Sat 9am-4pm.

Get Involved!

The Society is undertaking a variety of exciting projects in the library, and we also need volunteers to act as tour guides. Please contact Leslie Edwards at the Society at 248-338-6732 to find out where your skills and interests fit. This is **your** Society, and your participation is what makes us a viable and productive organization. We welcome any and all participants!

Awards

The Society has been chosen a winner in the 22nd Annual Pride & Beautification Program sponsored by the Pontiac City Council. Congratulations to the Grounds Committee for all their hard work!

Wayne State Univerity Volunteers

We would like to welcome graduate students Ann Rock and Mark Gnaster. Both have volunteered to help us with some of our library projects and we are happy to have them on board.

Commemorative Coffee Mugs

We now have coffee mugs commemorating the Society's 125th anniversary. These are for sale in the Gift Shop and the Library for \$3 each.

Staff

Administrative Director
Leslie S. Edwards
Manuscripts Librarian
Virginia Clohset
Research Librarians
Mary Wessels
Katherine Morton
Pat Fisher

New Library Hours!

— News & Notes —

The library is now open the same hours as the office: Tuesday thru Saturday, 9am-4pm. This is in order to allow better access to our materials for researchers. The Saturday hours have been very popular with our out of town guests as well as those who are employed during the week.

Pioneer Society Exhibit

To help celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Society, we are putting together an exhibit in honor of the original society members. The exhibit will include documents, photographs and artifacts representing the original pioneer settlers of Oakland County who founded this Society. We hope to have the exhibit up and ready by the beginning of November, 1999, so please plan on stopping by during library hours to visit this wonderful tribute.

Visit Us on the Internet!

Yes, we now have a web page you can access at http://wwnet.net/~ocphs/index.html
You can also contact us by e-mail at ocphs@wwnet.net. In the first month, the web page received 63 visitors and eight reference questions were answered via e-mail.

Do You Know Who We Are?



If you recognize this photo and know who these people are, please contact Leslie at the Historical Society.

Rosamond Haeberle

Letter From the President

From page 1

Since our former Director, Charles Martinez, retired in June and Renee Greer Alvrez took a position at the County, we have had a change of faces in the office. We certainly welcome Leslie Edwards, who comes to us with superior credentials, as our new Administrative Director. She is currently completing her Masters in Library Science with a certificate in Archival Administration from Wayne State. Her background includes a B.A. in Art Education from Michigan State University, ten years in restaurant management, and over fifteen years in family history research. For those of you who have not had the opportunity, please stop by the library and get to know her.

Together, Leslie and I are making plans to take the Society to another level in terms of service to our public, providing more efficient access to our collections. We are looking at different operating methods and training sessions for our great volunteers. Speaking of volunteers, who are too numerous to mention here, they have given over

2000 hours of their time already this year. A great big thank you to all of those who have helped this year!

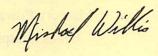
This year, we carried the theme of our 125th anniversary into a very successful and expanded Ice Cream Social, held on August 1st. We drew over 300 guests due in large part to a job well done by the Ice Cream Social Committee. We are about to embark on our Annual Dinner, to be held this year at the Elks Lodge #810 on October 20, 1999 at 6:30 pm, and our annual Victorian Christmas on December 12, from 12-4 pm. Those who wish to help with the Victorian Christmas need to contact Kitty Daggy at 852-9078 or Susan Metzdorf at 334-9336.

Recently, long-time member Faye Donelson retired from the Board and moved to Petoskey. We will really miss

— Membership Renewal —

Is your membership past due? If so, please take the time to fill out the enclosed application and send it in today!

Faye who served in many capacities on the Board for the past 32 years. In her name, we have established the Faye Donelson Library Fund, and have received over \$650 in donations so far. Anyone wishing to make a contribution can mail it to the office. We wish Faye all the best for her future.





From the Sarah Van Hoosen Jones Papers

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society 405 Oakland Avenue • Pontiac, Michigan 48342 (248) 338-6732

Yes, I'd/We'd like to join OCP & HS!

Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society

(Send to the above address)

Memberships, except life, are for one year.

☐ Individual Member	\$20.00
☐ Family	\$50.00
☐ Senior Member (62 & over)	\$15.00
☐ Student Member (18 & under)	\$10.00
Patron	\$75.00
☐ Benefactor	\$100.00
☐ Life Member	\$200.00
☐ Life Couple	\$300.00
Organization (Non-Profit)	\$50.00
☐ Business Member	\$150.00

Contributions and bequests to the Society, including memorials, assure the continuing restoration of Society properties and promotion of Oakland County's irreplaceable historical heritage. As charitable donations, such contributions allow the donor to take income tax deductions.

Welcome New Members

Melissa Adcock Ray Becker Doreen Chandler Mary L. Cheydleur William Clink

Kelly Dunlap

Margery Edwards

James Glaspie

Jeanne Gorlick

Betty Horn

Mary Kendall

John E. Kimball

Paul Osika

Melissa Pflug

Marjorie Pflug

Richard Steele

Barbara B. Thomson



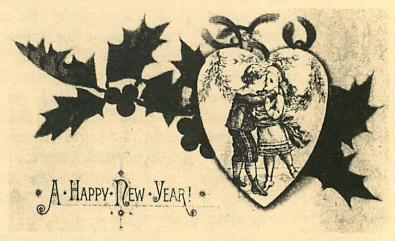
405 Oakland Avenue Pontiac, MI 48342

Preservation of the Past for the Enrichment of Future Generations.

Calendar of Events

October 20	Annual Dinner	6:30pm
November 20	Board Meeting	
December 9	Hanging of the Greens	
December 12	Victorian Christmas	
December 15	Board Meeting	
December 21	Dehanging of the Greens	
January 19	Annual General Meeting	1:00pm
All members are welco	ome to attend Board Meetings. They are held the third we	

All members are welcome to attend Board Meetings. They are held the third week of the month, alternating Wednesdays and Saturdays.



From the Sarah Van Hoosen Jones Papers

Internet address: http://wwnet.net/~ocphs/index.html

Email: ocphs@wwnet.net

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