



## THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

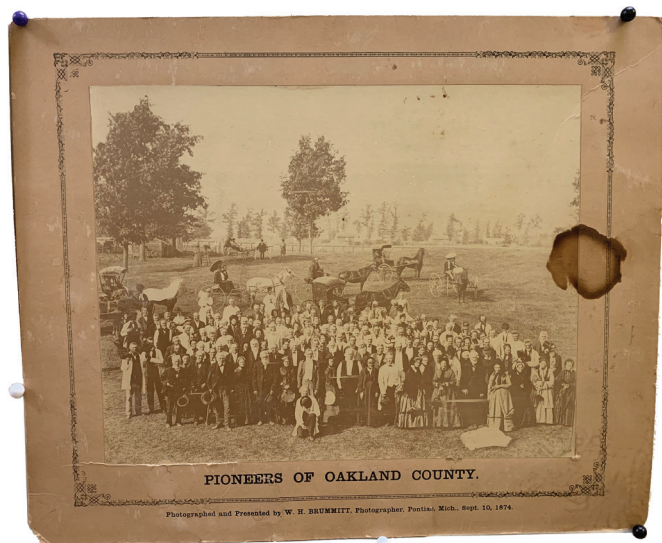
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### ARE YOU MY DADDY?



There is a photograph pinned to the wall in the Carriage House at the Oakland History Center. It is a little worse for wear, but then it was taken September 10, 1874, one hundred and forty-nine years ago. The photographer was Wm. H. Brummitt, a fairly well known artisan in Pontiac for many years. Why was it taken? To commemorate and memorialize the First Annual Summer Picnic of the newly formed Oakland County Pioneer Society.

The Society was organized in February of 1874, which means we will be celebrating one hundred and fifty years as a society in 2024! This is a big deal!

Originally, you had to prove you or your parents were pioneers in Oakland County to become a member of the Pioneer Society. These days we accept all comers who are interested in the history of their ancestors and Oakland County. The Society has changed a bit over the last century and a half. Our name has changed a bit as well, but we have been a viable organization since February of 1874, and that is something to celebrate!

Why the caption? Well, we have names of many of the original members of the Society, and photographs in the Pioneer Albums in our Archives, but we have never found a copy of this photograph with all of the individuals identified. Wouldn't it be grand if you could find your ancestor in the photograph and put a name to the face? Wouldn't it be fun to recreate this photograph next year to commemorate 150 years? Happy Birthday Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society!

### Pontiac's Link with the Artist Maurice Brazil Prendergast

Ray Henry

Unless you are an art historian specializing in the life and work of Post-Impressionist artist Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924), you might not know that Prendergast had a connection with Pontiac, Michigan. Prendergast was born in St John's, Newfoundland. But when he was only ten years old, his family moved to Boston, where he grew up in Boston's South End. In his youth, he was apprenticed to a commercial artist, but his talent for painting in both oil and watercolor was soon revealed. From 1891 to 1895, Prendergast studied painting in Paris at both the Académie Colarossi and at the Académie Julian. But it was in Boston, prior to his studies in Paris, that he encountered the beautiful Elizabeth Virginia Palmer (1875-1954).

By 1880, Prendergast had begun to establish himself as a painter, often visiting the exhibitions at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, which had opened in Copley Square in 1876. It was here that he most likely met Mrs. Charles Henry Palmer, Jr., also an amateur painter, and her daughter, Elizabeth, a sculptor. Elizabeth, or "Bess" (as she was known to her family) was educated in a manner appropriate for a young lady of her social status at that time. During the years 1888-1892 while living in Boston, Elizabeth attended dancing school and the New England



*Continued on page 3*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCES OFFICERS

At the July Board meeting of the Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society an election of officers was held for Board members who will guide the Society for the coming year. Board members are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Members and the Board selects officers at the next Board meeting. Candidates are put forth for the offices of President, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, per Society bylaws. Officers serve a one year term, but may be re-elected to their office. Officers re-elected to serve for 2023-2024 are:

**President:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:**

**Recording Secretary:**

**Treasurer:**

**Sara Cote**

**Dave Decker**

**Connor Newton**

**Barbara Frye**

**Joy Dockham**



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Sara Cote, Highland  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Dave Decker, Clarkston  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Connor Newton, Waterford  
 Secretary: Barbara Frye, Pontiac  
 Treasurer: Joy Dockham, Clarkston

### Board Members:

Nancy Calendine, Pontiac  
 Charlotte Cooper, Clarkston  
 Bill Grandstaff, Romeo  
 Dyann Hayes, Bloomfield Hills  
 Gwen Markham, Novi  
 Evan Monaghan, Pontiac  
 Linda Porter, Pontiac  
 Rosie Richardson, Pontiac  
 Rita Ski, Birmingham  
 Rodger Zeller, Waterford

Executive Director: Mike McGuinness  
 Office Staff: Evan Monaghan

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Gordon Duda, Rochester Hills  
 Penny Dye, Pontiac  
 Kathryn Fogarty, West Bloomfield  
 Pamela Gordon, Southfield  
 Kassandra Harrington, Dexter  
 Mark A Lloyd  
 Iola Miller, Pontiac  
 Karen Moore, Oxford  
 David Parkes, Rochester Hills  
 Lucy Payne, Pontiac  
 Randy Ston, West Bloomfield  
 Elise Wilson  
 Gloria Lacy, Keego Harbor

First Presbyterian Church of Pontiac



Society Membership dues run from January to December of each year.  
 Please consider OCPHS for your end of year tax deductible donations. Thank you.



Lori Miller as Eliza Leggett



Mike McGuinness as Chip Wisner



Connor Newton as Conrad Hoffman



Ray Henry as George Hoyt



Lisa Mohler as Josephine Lockwood



Artist Alex Gilford

## 2023 OAK HILL CEMETERY WALK

Lori Miller

The Friends of Oak Hill Cemetery presented their  
 8th annual cemetery walk on September 17th.  
 ~ A Brush with Death ~

Hello, folks!

On our first stop, we will hear from a woman whose descendants are accomplished in painting and music. Mrs. Leggett was portrayed by Lori Miller.

On our next stop, we will meet the artistic son of Governor Moses Wisner, Charles Hascall Wisner, known to the family as Chip.

Chip Wisner was portrayed by Mike McGuinness.

And now we are honored to have you meet the famous and respected violinist and music teacher, Conrad Ambrose Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman was portrayed by Connor Newton.

This is the burial plot for the former Eastern Michigan Asylum, later called Pontiac State Hospital, and Clinton Valley Center, which operated in Pontiac from 1878 to 1997. These are patients who died during care and not claimed by relatives or friends. They were interred in numbered burial plots with the expectation that some might eventually be claimed and moved to family sites elsewhere. In 2020, the patients were memorialized by volunteers with the placement of the marker that contains the names of the 283 deceased.

Next, we will meet another talented musician and teacher who was also a successful businessman, George Augustus Hoyt – and he is blind!

Mr Hoyt is portrayed by Ray Henry.

Now we are about to meet a very interesting and talented woman. She was a leader in Pontiac music circles as well as a teacher of piano, Josephine Crofoot Lockwood.

Mrs. Lockwood was portrayed by Lisa Mohler.

And now please watch your step as we cross the lawn to visit with a modern day artist who has joined us to support our preservation efforts through his painting, Mr. Alex Gilford.

On our final stop, we will meet a member of one of Pontiac's founding families – the Hodges. He was a pioneer automobile builder, artist and inventor, one of which a modern lawn mower.

George Schuyler Hodges.

Mr Hodges is portrayed by Dave Decker.

That concludes our visit with Artistic Creators of Pontiac's Past! And before you depart, we invite you to visit our merchandise tent. All proceeds benefit Oak Hill Cemetery. Thank you for visiting.



Dave Decker as George Hodges



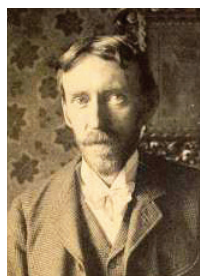


Conservatory of Music, took lessons at the Boston Riding Club, and was instructed at The School at 6 Marlborough Street.<sup>1</sup>

The School at 6 Marlborough Street was a private day school opened by Pauline Shaw (Mrs. Pauline Elizabeth Augusta (Agassiz) Shaw, the wife of mining investor Quincy Adams Shaw). It was designed to provide an education for Mrs. Shaw's own children, and to the children of families in the neighborhood. It was considered one of the most progressive schools in Boston, co-educational through all the grades, and a leader in innovative curricula and methods. Elizabeth Palmer's father, a graduate of the University of Michigan, had a long career in mining, an interest, no doubt, developed at an early age and inspired by his own father's interest in copper and silver mining in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. And so, it was no accident that Elizabeth was enrolled in Mrs. Shaw's school at 6 Marlborough Street; both families had a long history with Michigan's copper mining industry.

Possibly inspired by her friend Prendergast, Bess, and her mother, travelled to Paris in 1895 where both mother and daughter enrolled at the Académie Julian.

*The Palmers' alliance with Prendergast seems to have continued during the mid-1890s in Paris, where both mother, a painter, and daughter, a sculptor, were staying at the Hotel France et Choiseul on the Rue St. Honore, and attending the Académie Julian, where Prendergast had also studied. Elizabeth, together with her parents, associated with many of the American artists then living in Paris.*<sup>2</sup>



But Elizabeth's studies in Paris were cut short and the Palmers returned to Michigan, where on October 24th of 1896 Elizabeth married Thomas Parks Bradfield in Port Huron. They settled in Grand Rapids; however, the marriage did not last. In 1904, Mrs. Bradfield and her two children moved to Pontiac, Michigan, where she first lived on Williams Street to be close to her father's sister, Mrs. Conrad Hoffman (1851-1930). Mrs. Hoffman lived at 223 W. Huron Street (a residence of 6,446 sq. ft., 7 bedrooms, and 2.5 baths), which Mrs. Hoffman's father, Charles Henry Palmer, Sr., had purchased from the widow of Frederic Clemens Myrick in 1862 for \$6,000. Sometime after the death of Mrs. Hoffman's husband, Mrs. Bradfield and her children moved into the Myrick-Palmer house with her aunt.

After her separation from her husband, Elizabeth continued her career as a sculptor and started using Virginia Palmer Bradfield as her professional name. In 1914, she was awarded the first prize in sculpture in the Michigan Artists Exhibition sponsored by Detroit's Scarab Club, which marked the first time women artists were included in Scarab Club showings. Her work was also included in the Scarab Club's annual Exhibition of Michigan Artists at the Detroit Institute of Arts from 1914 to 1933. In addition, she was a member of the Detroit Society of Women Painters and Sculptors.<sup>3</sup> And in 1928, her work was exhibited in a group show of work by members of the Society of Detroit Women Painters at the Holt Gallery in New York City. Today, if you wanted to view one of Elizabeth Palmer Bradfield's works, you would only have to

travel as far as the campus of the Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills.

Cranbrook's founder, George Gough Booth, probably met Virginia Palmer Bradfield at one of the annual Scarab Club exhibitions. They started corresponding with each other in 1926 when Booth purchased one of her small sculptures. Then in 1927, Booth purchased a sculpted head (the masque of "Art"). It was exhibited in two shows. One was in March 1929 – the annual exhibition of the Detroit Society of Women Painters. It was written up in the *Detroit News*, which said, "The masque has the imponderable quality we find in things of lasting beauty." It was then in the first Cranbrook Art Museum for several years before being installed over the "Beauty Arch" in Cranbrook School's Quadrangle.<sup>4</sup>



But back to Post-Impressionist Maurice Prendergast. At a Sotheby's sale of American Painting on Wednesday, May 19, 2004 in New York City, two small watercolors by Prendergast (i.e., lot 21 and 22: *The Band Concert*, *Luxembourg Gardens* and *Bal Bullier*, *Latin Quarter*, respectively the front and back covers of the exhibition catalog) went on the auction block. These two exquisite examples of Prendergast's work were purchased directly from the artist by Virginia Palmer Bradfield's parents, and for more than 50 years hung in the "Little Parlor" of the Myrick-Palmer residence, right across the street from the old Pontiac Central High School. The family tradition is that the model in both paintings is Prendergast's friend from his early days in Boston, i.e., the young Virginia Palmer Bradfield.

Virginia Palmer Bradfield continued to live at 223 West Huron Street until her death on May 27, 1954. She is buried in Pontiac's historic Oak Hill Cemetery. Her daughter, Mrs. Harold Lee Ward, sadly died just a few months after her mother. And her son, Thomas Palmer Bradfield, died the next year in 1955; he was only 56. The house at 223 W. Huron then passed to Harold Lee Ward and his three daughters, Virginia Palmer Ward (a.k.a. Dolly Golding), Elizabeth Palmer Ward (Mrs. Edmund DeVine), and Ann Ward (Mrs. George Spaeth). In 1985, the Myrick-Palmer House was purchased by the Preservation Interest Group. Dolly Golding continued to live at 223 W. Huron until her death in August of 1990.

Ray Henry

<sup>1</sup> Sotheby's *American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture*, New York, May 19, 2004

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Founded in 1903 as the Detroit Society for Women Painters. The "and Sculptors" was added to the group's name in 1930.

<sup>4</sup> "A Face Above Beauty," *The Cranbrook Kitchen Sink*, 13 July 2018

(<https://cranbrookkitchensink.com/tag/elizabeth-palmer-bradfield/>)



## 2023 SUMMER ICE CREAM SOCIAL

*Michael McGuinness*

Our Historical Society's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Ice Cream Social was a hit! Thank you very much to the many sponsors, boosters, volunteers, attendees and shoppers that made the two-day celebration so successful. July 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> was a banner weekend for visitors to our Oakland History Center, with crowds in the hundreds each day. With every passing year our long-running tradition of the Summer Ice Cream Social becomes even more impressive. These past few years we've been able to stretch our legs and utilize even more of the acreage on our historic campus, and the 2023 version continued to expand our event's horizons. Thank you again -- and mark your calendars for the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Ice Cream Social next July when we will celebrate 150 years for the Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society!

Sincerely,  
Mike McGuinness, Executive Director



Photo credits on this page go to:  
Cynthia Jahn, Michael Mc Guinness, and Barbara Frye ~ Thank you!

## NEW BOYS IN TOWN!

Some of the charter members of the newly formed Jeremiah Clark chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution are pictured to the right with their Patriot Project Flag Poster.

From left to right are: Dave Walls, Ken Loudy, Dave Decker, Grant Goulet, Dave Suzor & Mike Packard.





# THANK YOU TO OUR MANY GENEROUS EVENT SPONSORS!

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**MAYOR TIM GREIMEL - CAROLL TURPIN - JEN BURK**

**JUDGE MARK SLAVENS - KHALFANI STEPHENS**

*Thank yoooo*



**ENJOY OUR 54TH ANNUAL  
SUMMER ICE  
CREAM SOCIAL**



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Fellow lovers of our local history,

We are coming up on a big, big milestone and I'm excited to celebrate it with all of you. Next year, in 2024, our venerable Historical Society Mark's our 150th year of existence. That's right: the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society

first convened in 1874 here in Pontiac, Michigan.

This auspicious anniversary is due, in part, to you. Yes — you! You see, this organization only continues on and exists because we fellow Historical Society members are committed to continue the mission. If new members don't join and current members don't renew, we shrink until eventually we cease to exist. If donors and volunteers don't step up, we shrink until eventually we cease to exist.

That is true today, yes, but it was also true five and ten years ago. It was also true five and ten decades ago, too. One individual — you! — can make a difference and breathe life into our nearly-150-year-old collective body.

More than most entities, we make a point to learn about and honor and reflect on the contributions of our past members. I mean, we are the Historical Society. It's totally our thing, our essence. Yet and still I know we can do even more to amplify those who came before us and acknowledge how they helped breathe renewed life into our organization in crucial ways and at crucial junctures.

In the 150th year to come, let us come together and do just that. Let's learn about our Society through the generations, let's raise up those stories, let's celebrate the great work we continue to do, and let's have fun! Throughout the entire year of 2024 we are going to mark this occasion. Please join us and please help shape these celebrations into the best possible shared effort.

Thank you and bless you,  
Mike McGuinness



Remembering a long time member and volunteer

Joan Pate  
1930 ~ 2023

Known to Society members as "Jo" she was a valued researcher and editor, publishing many cook books, and cemetery volumes. An avid quilter, many of you own one of her creations. She will be sorely missed.

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

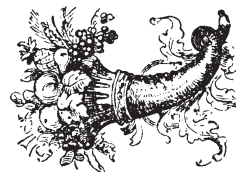


Hello Members!

As always, I want to thank you for being here! We couldn't do this without your support, and we appreciate every one of you! I hope you were able to attend one of our many carousing events this year! The next event I am most excited about is the return of our Fall Gala Auction! This has always been my favorite event and I am thrilled to see it return. I have countless fond memories of all the hours spent planning the event right down to the thrill of the night. I will never forget all the times past President Fred Liimatta would burst into the carriage house enthusiastically showing off his latest interesting or vintage finds. Today I can walk into just about any room of my house and see something unique I picked up at the auction. Guests often comment and say, "ooh I love that, where did you get it?" Why, the Museum Auction of course! This year the Pontiac Creative Arts center has been so gracious to host us, and I hope you will consider joining us on Saturday, November 11th! Come and find your piece of history and make some new memories to last a lifetime.

Happy Fall and take care,

Sara Cote



### 2023 Holiday Extravaganza

*This event is sponsored by Auburn Hills, Pontiac, Waterford & White Lake, with lots of outdoor activities and a grand Parade! This year OCPHS volunteers will be dressed in Period Costumes and riding in one of the horse drawn carriages in the parade.*

### 2023 Holiday Open House at Pine Grove

*Come one, come all for our annual Holiday Open House, taking place on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>! The wintry decor, tours, crafts, games, live music, and historic displays will be taking place from noon to 4 pm each day. If you're feeling especially filled with the holiday spirit, we welcome any individual, group, or family that would like to 'adopt' a room to festoon with holiday magic.*

*Contact our office at  
(248) 338-6732 to let us know of your interest,  
or with any questions.*



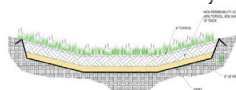
## AROUND THE HISTORY CENTER...

We've solved a local history mystery! This building date stone was in one of our sheds for years with no identifying info. We placed it on our grounds with signage asking for feedback. Well, it led to one of our members Dave Decker researching it further and learning it is from the historic Hodges Hotel that was at Pike and Saginaw in downtown Pontiac, Michigan from 1838 to 1962. Not only that, but he located where there had been a base stone identifying it and we picked that up and reunited the stones!

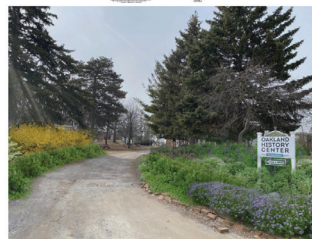


## NATIVE PLANT GARDEN UPDATE

If you have visited our campus in the past couple months, you may have noticed a lot of changes to the grounds near our front entrance. It may not look like much now, but this is the site of our new Native Plant Garden, made possible with a generous grant from the Board of Commissioners of Oakland County! It has been our intention to focus on plants which evolved in the Great Lakes region—the kinds of things you might have seen growing in the savannas of this county before widespread European settlement. As our new plantings take root, they should return year after year, providing a beautiful—and ecologically sound—vista to welcome you to the Oakland History Center!



For the Rain Garden (left of view):  
Aster spp.  
Asplenium platyneuron  
Carex spp.  
Liatris spicata  
Helianthus scaberrimus (or Schizanthus)  
Monarda didyma  
Rudbeckia spp.  
Rhus aromatica 'Scribner'



For the entrance:  
Aster spp.  
Asplenium platyneuron  
Carex spp.  
Helianthus scaberrimus (or Schizanthus)  
Monarda didyma  
Rudbeckia spp.  
Rhus aromatica 'Scribner'

## OCPHS BOARD MEMBER RECEIVES AWARD

OCPHS Board of Directors Recording Secretary Barbara Frye received a Community Service Award from the Sashabaw Plains Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. At the September Board meeting SPDAR Regent Cynthia Jahn and State Chaplain Charlotte Cooper, presented the award to Barbara. This award is given when the recipient has shown exemplary efforts in the community and has willingly given many hours of time volunteering in several arenas. Charlotte is Past President of OCPHS, and SPDAR members Joy Dockham and Ann Stevens were also present at the meeting representing their Chapter.



Cynthia Jahn, Barbara Frye, and Charlotte Cooper Photo credit: Ann Johnson



## 2023 COMING EVENTS

### Downtown Pontiac Walking Ghost Tours

October 15th and 22nd

### History Center Harvest Festival

Sunday, October 29th

### Historical Society Gala Auction

with the Pontiac Creative Arts Center

Saturday, November 11th

### Holiday Extravaganza Parade

In historical costumes

Saturday, December 2nd

### Holiday Open House

Saturday & Sunday ~ December 9th and 10th

All events held at OCPHS Campus unless otherwise noted  
405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of  
Richard Martin Schmaltz  
12 July 1943 ~ 12 October 2023

Known to his friends and family as Dick, he served in  
the US Navy Submarine Service during the  
Viet Nam era and is sadly missed by our Volunteer  
Pam Schmaltz and daughters Amy & Elizabeth



**THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER  
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

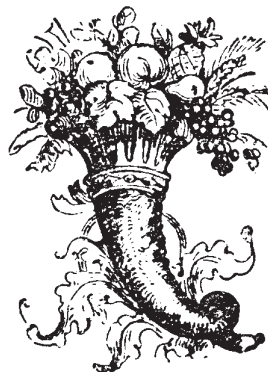
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The Oakland History Center sits on traditional and ancestral lands and waters of the Anishinaabe people, also known as the Three Fires Confederacy comprised of the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. From 1844 to 1863, it was home to Moses Wisner, including during his time as Governor of the State of Michigan. The Wisner family owned the property, now a National Historic Site, until 1945 when our Historical Society acquired it from the granddaughter and serve as the caretakers today.

**Follow us on social media and watch your email for  
further information on our events!**

Find us on [facebook.com/OaklandHistoryCenter](https://facebook.com/OaklandHistoryCenter)



Follow us on **X** (formerly Twitter)  
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We regularly send out email updates between Gazette editions, including local history stories and details about upcoming events.

If you don't receive these and would like to be added to our email list, contact us today to let us know!

email: [office@ocphs.org](mailto:office@ocphs.org)

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~ or message us on facebook ~



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**ABOUT THE OAKLAND GAZETTE**

Oakland Gazette is a publication of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Submissions, content suggestions, or comments are always welcomed.

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Gazette Crew: C. Cooper, P. Schmaltz, D. Decker, M. McGuinness

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