

Governor Moses Wisner Mansion (ca. 1845)

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October 2005

## OCPHS HAPPENINGS....



Everything is coming up roses! As this Gazette goes to press, the rosebushes are being planted along the street-side of the Wisner House. Our appeal to our members and friends to buy a rosebush as a start to our master landscaping restoration plan met with an enthusiastic response. We needed 150 bushes for the hedge and all were purchased. This week Goldner Walsh Nurseries began the planting. We can hardly wait until next spring to see the blossoms. *Bouquets* to all who so generously supported this project!

The next project in this master plan is the brick walkway from the driveway to the Wisner House; then another walk from the driveway to the schoolhouse. These pavers may be engraved as directed by the purchasers to honor or memorialize a friend, a relative, a pioneer, etc. We are still reviewing the information from the various companies. We don't have a final price at this time, but hope to have information available before Christmas. Let us know if you want further information as soon as it is available. Think Christmas gifts, anniversary memorials, etc.

## SOCIETY STAFF POSITION....

The new **Operations Coordinator** for our society is **Lisa Purdy**. She graduated as valedictorian of her high school class in the Brandon Township School District. She lives in Oxford and is in school at Oakland Community College studying for a degree in criminal justice. Our part time position is ideal for her at this time with her busy school schedule. Lisa is very organized and has impressive computer skills; she is easy to work with and we are fortunate to have her with us. Be sure to introduce yourself when you are in the carriage house.



Lisa Purdy

## COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE....

We have hired an associate to work with the Collection Management coordinator. Donna Mallonen, a volunteer for the last year, is working on indexing original documents for easier access for the library staff and patrons. Donna was born and raised in Pontiac and was in the high school class of 1980. She has a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation with concentration in Urban and Regional Planning from Eastern Michigan University. She is well qualified for her new position and we are pleased to have her on our team.

## SCHOOLHOUSE FACELIFT....

The schoolhouse has had a facelift and looks younger than its almost 135 years. Rotted and damaged wood has been replaced and repairs have been completed and the fresh coats of white paint on the building and green on the shutters complete the makeover.

### IN THIS ISSUE

LANDSCAPE – ROSES	1
LANDSCAPE – PAVERS	1
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR POSITION	1
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE	1
SCHOOLHOUSE FACELIFT	1
ANNUAL MEETING	2
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	2
NEW MEMBERS	2
GIFT SHOP	2
COMMITTEES & CHAIRMEN	2
RESULTS OF SUMMER EVENTS	2
FIRST VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS	3
VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE 2005	3
VIRGINIA RODGERS MEMORIAL	4
JOHNSTOWN FLOOD STORY	5
MORE SUMMER EVENTS	6
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	6
OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS	7
PONTIAC – A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE	7

## ANNUAL MEETING.....

Last January, for the second year in a row, the annual meeting of our Society had to be postponed because of the weather. When the annual meeting was finally held, it was approved that the meeting be held in May of each year. This was accepted as an amendment to our by-laws. Because of this change, those on the Board of Directors automatically have their term of office extended until the next annual meeting, scheduled for May 2006.

Any member of OCPHS may attend meetings of the Board of Directors. For 2005 the one remaining meeting is Saturday, November 19 at 9:30 a.m. There is no meeting in December. Be sure to sign in at the meeting.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE....

The nominating process for the Board of Directors will now begin in February, 2006. The procedure has been changed in order to secure more information about those running for the Board. We hope this will help the membership with their selection of members to run our organization. The chairman is Joan Pate, assisted by Kathryn Daggy.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS.....

Robert Bartley, West Bloomfield  
Carol Ciaramitaro, Walled Lake  
Janice W. Kralj, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin  
Karen Krugman, Birmingham  
Kris Oswald, Linden  
Frances Smith, Dearborn  
Richard Starr, Portland, Oregon  
Village of Wolverine Lake Historic Team  
Judy Kalter, West Bloomfield  
Peggy Balowski, Auburn Hills

## GIFT SHOP....

Judy Hudalla has many new items in the gift shop, including some hand-made items recently donated by **Miriam Foxman**. There are also some hand-made baby quilts and sweaters available.

At the end of our used book sale early in the summer, there were many almost new books that were worth saving. We have these for sale in the gift shop and the carriage house. Paperbacks are \$.25 and hard-covers are \$1.00. We have lots of good reading for the cold winter days.

## SOCIETY COMMITTEES AND CHAIRMEN...

Almost all committees need members and we invite you to choose your area of interest and get involved. New ideas are welcome!

**Guides:** David Hackett  
**Costumes (for guides) :** Jean Milton  
**Library:** Fran Wilson  
**Oral History:** Connie Scafe  
**Grounds, Maintenance:** Gale Scafe  
Guy Duffield

**Grounds, Landscaping:** Fran Wilson  
Guy Duffield

**Accessions:** Geoff Brieger  
Charles Martinez

**Building Maintenance:** Guy Duffield  
Keith Bennett  
Gale Scafe

### Schoolhouse & Education:

Kathryn Daggy

**Finance:** Amy Annett  
Keith Bennett  
Rex Lameroux

**Gift Shop:** Judy Hudalla

**Nominating:** Jo Pate  
Kathryn Daggy

**Membership:** LeVon DeLisle

**Clothing & Textiles:** no chair

**Exhibits:** no chair

## RESULTS OF SUMMER EVENTS....

The Second Saturday house tour and Used Book Sale in July brought out more people than we anticipated.

The Pontiac Garden Club Tour included our grounds and an introduction to our landscaping restoration concept. The proceeds of their fund-raiser was donated to our Society to help with our landscaping plans. Thank you ladies!!

The Second Saturday and White Elephant sale, August 13, was a resounding success. Just proves that one person's discards are another's treasures. This also brought several more visitors to the Wisner Mansion.

Arts, Beats and Eats, always scheduled for Labor Day weekend, was chaired by **Judy Hudalla**. As usual, she filled in all the spots for 4 days, with volunteers from our society, and friends. Our share of the charity donations was over \$1400. Judy, we couldn't have done it without you. Volunteers working with her were: Scott Tupper, Pam & John Epple, Mike Willis, Sylvia Adams, Jan Bell, Kimberly Bell, John & Greta Cohassey, Jeff Barnes, Guy, Nancy and Tom Duffield, Robert & Joan Hayes, Donna Mallonen, Brian Menghini, Robert Zeller.  
Cheers to all of you!!

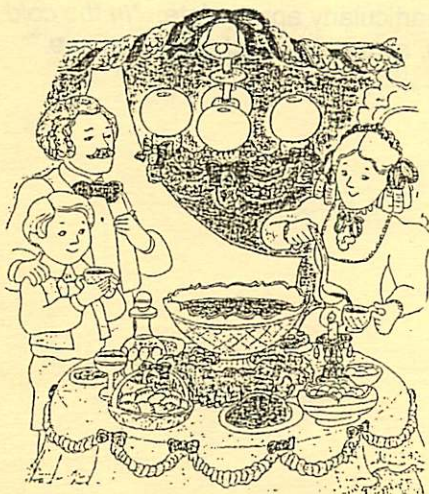
**THE FIRST VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS AT PINE GROVE** was held in December 1968. The Gazette issue published in January 1969 reports on the event as follows:

*The first of what will hopefully become an annual event, "A Victorian Christmas at Pine Grove", has been termed a success by those involved in its planning and executing. The attempt to interpret the beginnings of our modern Christmas holiday was attended on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 7 p.m. by around 600 persons. Visitors were treated to carols by Wisner School students, dulcimer music by Merritt Olsen and his son from Birmingham, hot mulled cider, raspberry shrub and breads and cookies. The refreshments were provided by Mrs. Cameron Clark and her committee.*

*Highlight of the week is the period decorating throughout the Wisner House which was planned by Mrs. A. E. Ayers and hung by the entire Activities Committee under co-chairmen Mrs. Richard Wright and Mrs. Robert Anderson. The 10' parlor tree, its candle holders and the hand-made beeswax candles used throughout the house were gifts of Mr. & Mrs. William Rathburn of Lake Orion. Toys of the period under the tree were recent gifts of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kelly of Detroit, and were used in the Anderson and Dickson families of Andersonville, Oakland County. The tree itself was decorated by Sally, Susan and Bobby Anderson, Don Deyo and Larry Williams under the direction of Mrs. Anderson.*

*Group tours were scheduled through December 13<sup>th</sup> and the house remained open every night, Monday through Friday, for those not able to come on Sunday.*

*Last minute totals during the Christmas open week show that approximately 1200 people visited the property and that receipts from the silver donation taken as well as student admissions total \$197.20.*



*Victorian Christmas 1969*

## **VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE 2005**

After a three year absence, we are having this event again. All members will receive a flyer early in November. Please arrange a group for a tour during the week of December 12 to 15. Add Sunday, December 11, 2005 to your calendar and plan on enjoying our Victorian Christmas with its festive decorations and ambiance. Hours for Open House are 12 noon to 4 p.m.

To make this event even more meaningful to you, volunteer to help with hanging of greens December 8, 10 to 2 pm; the de-hanging of greens Friday, December 16, 10 to 2pm. We also need help with guiding, serving, baking holiday cookies, etc. To volunteer call our office.

**THIS IS OUR MAJOR FUND RAISING EVENT FOR THE YEAR.**

**SPONSORSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE**

## "GINI" RODGERS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Champion of Historical Preservation  
and Society Board Member Remembered

by Charles H. Martinez



As a dazzling sun infused a sapphire sky in late July, a line of mourners filed into the Franklin Community Church in Franklin Village to celebrate the life and times of the late Virginia DeBenham Rodgers. 'Gini' to her friends died June 16, 2005 of lung cancer at the home of one of her daughters near Augusta, Georgia. She was 77.

Kathryn Daggy, the Society's immediate past-president, and this writer represented the organization at the service.

The setting for "saying goodbye" was perfect. Like a Grant Wood painting, the church with its lofty spire looks east across the village commons to a tree-lined main street that Rodgers knew intimately as a resident here for more than forty years. Also within view of the church is the Broughton House, one of her most memorable preservation projects, and an archaeological site whose investigation in the mid-1990s brought me into contact with Gini.

Rodgers was a powerhouse for civic causes whether they be at the home town or state level. At the time of her death it is estimated that she was serving on the boards of nine non-profit organizations.

As a representative of the Oakland County Cultural Council, Gini came to Pine Grove to participate in a state-wide museum workshop in June 1981. Two years later she and her architect husband Stuart Rodgers hosted a spring lecture series here entitled "Revitalization of Main Street," based on their efforts to restore the Broughton House and in general preserve the cultural heritage of Franklin Village.

Gini was a life member of the Society and served on its Board of Directors from the late 1990s into the early years of this decade. She was also instrumental in assisting many of the Society's projects through her service to the County as Director of Cultural Affairs from 1981 to 1992. In contrast, her early career included time spent as an American Airline stewardess and pathology lab assistant.

Gini loved animals, too. She became the Doctor Dolittle of Franklin Village, making a home for all sorts of abandoned and displaced creatures.

She is survived by three daughters, eight grandchildren, two step-daughters, and four step-grandchildren.

For Gini, the last lines of the memorial service closing hymn were particularly appropriate: *"In the cold and snow of winter there is a spring that waits to be/ Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."*

Thanks, Gini. For us you were a lady for all seasons.

# WHAT YOU CAN FIND WHILE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING ELSE...

While searching for information for a patron, I found the following article in old Pontiac Gazette. This was shortly after the tsunami in Asia, so it is appropriate to run this article, in extracted form.

Pontiac Gazette June 14, 1889

## RELIEF FOR JOHNSTOWN

### PONTIACERS CONTRIBUTE IN AID OF THE SUFFERING

Last week the Hon. W.E. Hinman, Mayor of Pontiac, issued a proclamation on June 8, 1889 to the people of Pontiac:

It is unnecessary to call your attention to the details of the terrible disaster to the cities and villages of the Conemaugh Valley, Penn., by which thousands lost their lives and other thousands were rendered homeless, penniless and in want. Americans never before witnessed such a fatality, or had such an appeal for prompt aid. All the civilized world responds, let Pontiac do like-wise.

I therefore request all our citizens to assemble at Music Hall, on Sunday afternoon at 3:00 o'clock sharp, June 9<sup>th</sup>, prepared to respond liberally in aid of the sufferers by the great disaster.

The collection committee will consist of W. H. Morgans, C.W. Horton, C.V. Taylor, Geo. H. Foster, Geo. B. Dawson and Dr. C.B. Burr. Contributions will be received by either of the above named, at any time previous to Monday night.

(At the end of pledging time Monday evening, the "snug little sum" of \$542.36 had been subscribed.)

Those pledging monies to aid the victims of the Johnstown flood were:

Eastern Mich. Asylum	\$38 30
A Friend	1 00
A Friend "Teacher"	1 00
Contribution	2 62
Mrs S S Matthews	3 00
Medbury Gas Works	10 00
G H Foster	1 00
Stephen Thrush	1 00
John Toynton	1 00
Mr and Mrs E W Peck	5 00
Mr Wiest	1 00
H J Gerls	5 00
P A Crawford	2 00
James Ingoldsbay	1 00
T Page	50
Mr and Mrs J S Miller	1 00
C W Horton	3 00
J H Simonds	1 00
Mrs Stevens	50
M Halpenny	25
D W Denio	1 00
T Grow	1 00
A S King	5 00
W E Williams	2 00
Mrs Moses Wisner	5 00
Holloway Bros	1 00
J F Dunning	1 00
P Schmitz	1 00
Mrs James Cash	1 00
Mrs J P Foster	1 00
E W Bell	1 00
Doc Leet	1 00
E A Merritt	1 00
Dophy Hines	1 00
S A Dewey	1 00
J C Powell	5 00
G M Trowbridge	1 00
H H Colvin	1 00
J S Stockwell	3 00
C V Taylor	5 00
E M Murphy	3 00
N Abbott	2 00
L O Trowbridge	1 00
John Mason	1 00
Mrs W S Albertson	1 00

J G Buchanan	1 00
S A Hillman	5 00
E A Cole	1 00
B S Tregent	5 00
D L Davis	5 00
Lewis & Crofoot	2 00
I B Merritt	5 00
Jas Houston	10 00
L R Lumby	1 00
John P Wilson	5 00
G W Alexander	1 00
H Cully	1 00
Frank Parkins	5 00
Mrs Geo Green	5 00
Jno Pound & Bro	10 00
Mrs H Brown	1 00
Dawson Bros	5 00
Mrs Brotherton	50
Laura Thompson	10
Cong church	8 50
Chas Dawson Sr	10 00
Beebe & Stevens	1 00
Pres Church	3 50
Mr and Mrs W S Albertson	2 00
Cash	2
M E church	66 04
James McGown	25
Mrs D C Buckland	5 00
W J Fisher	1 00
Ed Hallett	1 00
H F Messenger	5 00
A Parker	5 00
Wm G Hinman	25 00
Mrs Dunlap	2 00
Harry Kemp	1 00
O L Backenstose	1 00
Jas Buchanan	1 00
Jacob Bros	5 00
W F Stuart	2 00
W H Osmun	1 00
D Hubbell	1 00
George Shiman	1 00
W Mathews	1 00
T N Turk	5 00
G Jacobs	2 00
J Linabury	50
J Hammond	1 00

Mrs E A Draper	1 00
N Elwell	25
Ed Pierson	50
John Chinaman	50
Mrs Marshall	1 00
W D Harshaw	1 00
D Derrigan & Co	2 00
A Leroy	1 00
E Allison	1 00
M Moutier	1 00
C M Eaton	50
Dr J W Smith	1 00
Joseph Kramer	1 00
F Moore	50
M Sharp	50
M D Sly	2 00
Walter Lightness	1 00
Jno D Norton	10 00
Peter Betzing	1 00
C A Palmer	5 00
P J Walton	1 00
T A & J E Pound	2 00
W McCarroll	5 00
Robt Brown	1 00
H Terbusch	1 00
Ed Stevens	50
A A Lull	10 00
Geo Killam	1 00
T L Patterson	2 00
Chas Draper	1 00
Archie McCallum	1 00
Abe Osmun	1 00
Pontiac Steam Laundry	5 00
A Buckle	1 00
C B Pittman	2 00
A B Avery	2 00
E LaBaron	5 00
H Wyckoff	1 00
Fred Millis	1 00
Edward Moran	1 00
John Patterson	1 00
John McCallum	1 00
E J Kelly	5 00
Y W C T U, Pontiac	5 00
Total	\$542 36

**MORE EVENTS....**

**Habitat for Humanity** held their Volunteer Appreciation Day on September 25, and over 100 guests attended. Our weaver/spinner demonstrated her crafts, all our facilities were open for viewing, children played Victorian games, cider and donuts were devoured. We also had a chance to meet some of the families for whom houses are being built. The stormy weather held off until late afternoon, for which we all were grateful. It was wonderful to share our facilities with the Habitat family.

The **Oakland Archeological Day** was held on our grounds October 8. There were about 40 in attendance at this event, hosted by Dr. Richard Stamps. The speakers were well received and the responses were positive.

**OLSHA** held 2 energy workshops in the schoolhouse in the past few weeks.

**COMING EVENTS....**

Planning is well under way for our Victorian Open House scheduled for December 11. Already there are 4 tours scheduled for school groups during the week. This is a unique experience for young people and we urge school groups, church youth groups, and others, to arrange for a tour. Adult tours are welcome, also. We will need help with hanging of the greens, guiding, baking cookies, de-hanging of greens. Call the office to sign up.

Autumn is a good time for schoolchildren and adults to tour our complex. Call for more information about tour availability.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

***Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society***

405 Cesar Chavez Avenue • Pontiac, Michigan 48342 • (248) 338-6732

Yes, I'd/We'd like to join OCPHS!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if gift membership from \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships are for one year.

- Student .....\$15.00
- Senior (65 & Over) .....\$15.00
- Individual .....\$20.00
- Couple .....\$35.00
- Family (Parents & Children) .....\$50.00
- Non-Profit Organization .....\$20.00
- Patron .....\$75.00
- Benefactor .....\$150.00
- Corporate Sponsor .....\$500.00

Check desired membership category and enclose this application with check or money order made payable to:

***Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society***

## OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### OFFICERS

Mike Willis – President  
Keith Bennett – First Vice-President  
Fran Wilson – Second Vice-President  
Secretary – Kathryn Daggy  
Treasurer – Amy Annett

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

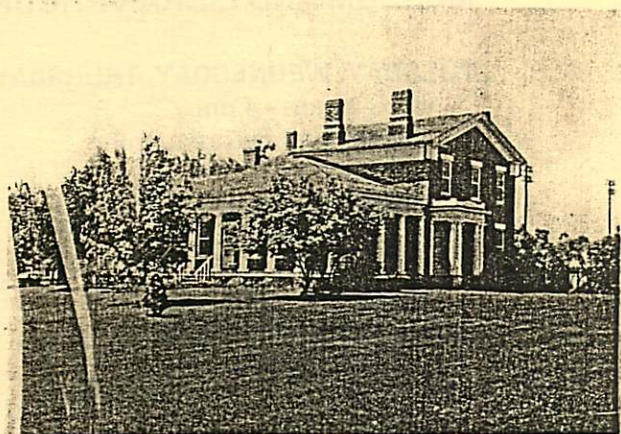
Sylvia Adams	David Hackett	Joan Pate
Bruce Annett	Judith Hudalla	Constance Scafe
Guy Duffield	Barbara Irwin	Gale Scafe
Frank Edwards	Annalee Kennedy	Richard Stamps
Gaylor Forman	Rex Lamoreaux	Scott Tupper
Miriam Foxman	Charles Martinez	Rodger K. Zeller
Mark Gnaster	Jean Milton	

The *Oakland Press*, October 23, 2005, ran a series of articles entitled "Pontiac at the Crossroad". Included were interviews with residents stating that Pontiac was "a good place to live." Here is an earlier article with the same focus.

*FROM THE PONTIAC GAZETTE, October 13, 1893:*

### PONTIAC A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE

In many respects Pontiac is one of the best and most pleasant residence places in the state. A family now living here has resided in several places in the state. The head of the family is a traveling man whose wife desired to move from where they resided. He said to her, "If you must change, move to Pontiac, for I'd rather live there than any place in the state." This man expresses the opinion of most traveling men, and they are certainly good judges of places for residence. Shall we tell you why? The people of Pontiac have, by their enterprise, done much to make Pontiac attractive in keep up and adorning their homes. This essential to the beauties of a home is supplemented by the finest suburban attractions in the state. Leading to these summer pleasure grounds are roads almost equal to macadamized pike. These are the attractions and comforts which draw enterprising citizens to Pontiac.



WISNER MANSION



ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

1896 PHOTOGRAPHS



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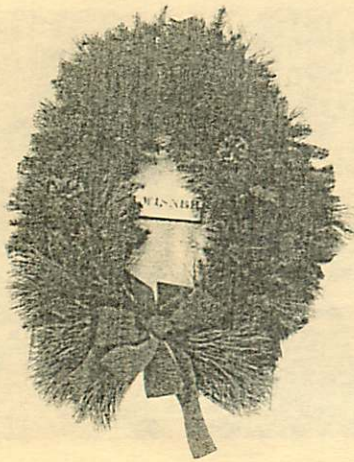
Phone: 248.338.6732  
Fax: 248.338.6731

ocphs@wwnet.net

<http://wwnet.net/~ocphs/index.html>

*PRESERVATION OF THE PAST  
FOR THE ENRICHMENT OF  
FUTURE GENERATIONS*

## VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE



## MUSEUM AND LIBRARY HOURS

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY  
11 am - 4 pm  
Please call before coming

WISNER HOUSE TOURS  
by appointment

GROUPS WELCOME  
CALL FOR INFORMATION  
248-338-6732

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2005