



Governor Moses Wisner Mansion (ca. 1845)

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Published by THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Summer 2007

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

To all of our members and friends –

We are in the beginning of a new year at the Society and I believe that it will be an exciting one for all. I would like to thank the past year's officers for the fine efforts that they put forth during very tough economic times. Unless you are involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization you do not know the amount of work and dedication that these volunteers put in to make things run smoothly.

We are constantly meeting to find ways to raise funds, apply for grants, get sponsors from all walks of life and involve the major business community. None of this is easy to do or can be called a sure thing. The most important thing that all of us can do as members of this society is to continue to support the organization in any way we can financially, and as volunteers with the giving of our time. OCPHS has survived for well over 100 years, some in very difficult economic times, because of the great members we have. We will not let ourselves fail now.

There is a new and very important committee that we are forming called the **Events Committee**. This committee will be responsible for developing the ideas and planning the future fund raising events. If you have any knowledge or experience in fund-raising and event planning, we would like to hear from you. Give us a call at 248.338.6732 or call me at home at 248.334.0054.

Once again, thank you to the past officers for your work. Remember, the way to success is for all of us to volunteer and work together for the good of the organization. May God bless and watch over you 'til we meet again.

Mike Willis, President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the annual meeting of the Society, held May 19, 2007, the following members were elected as officers for the 2007 – 2008 year:

OFFICERS:

President: Michael E. Willis
1st Vice President: Joan Pate
2nd Vice President: Guy Duffield
Treasurer: Amy Annett
Secretary: Kathryn Daggy

BOARD MEMBERS

Amy Annett, Waterford
Bruce Annett, Waterford
Janice Bell, Waterford
Kimberly Bell, Macomb
Keith Bennett, Rochester Hills
Kathryn Daggy, Auburn Hills
LaVon DeLisle, Pontiac
Guy Duffield, Waterford
Gaylor Forman, Bloomfield Hills
Miriam Foxman, Keego Harbor
Brian Golden, Farmington
Gil Haven, Linden
Judith Hudalla, Waterford
Barbara Irwin, Waterford
Annalee Kennedy, Sylvan Lake
Rex Lamoreaux, Pontiac
Charles Martinez, West Bloomfield
Joan Pate, Bloomfield Hills
C. Corydon Randall, Bloomfield Hills
James Slezinski, Lake Orion
Richard Stamps, Rochester
Michael Willis, Pontiac
Fran Wilson, Bloomfield
Rodger Zeller, Waterford

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The following COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN have been appointed for 2007-2008:

Finance: Amy Annett
Site Improvement/Public Accommodations: Guy Duffield
Membership: Jo Pate
Accessions: Geoff Breiger
House: Janice Bell & Kimberly Bell
Library: Fran Wilson
Oral History: Kimberly Bell
Schoolhouse/Education: Kathryn Daggy
Grounds/Maintenance: Guy Duffield
Landscaping: Guy Duffield & Fran Wilson
Clean-up/Clean-out: Jo Pate & Charles Martinez
Tours & Guides: Rodger Zeller
Costumes: Jo Pate
Gift Shop: Judy Hudalla
Publicity: Brian Golden
Publications: Jo Pate

Currently, there are no chairmen for the following committees:

Clothing & Textiles
Master Plan/Policy & Procedures
Exhibits
Events
Volunteers
Historical Research

Interested? Call us. You don't have to be on the Board of Directors to serve on a committee!

IN MEMORIAM

John K. Irwin of Bloomfield Hills died on June 6, 2007. John had practiced law in Pontiac and later in West Bloomfield. He served on the Pontiac School Board for many years and was active in B.P.O.E., Lions Club, Birmingham Men's Club and First Presbyterian Church of Pontiac. He and his family were long-time supporters of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. His widow, Barbara, is currently a member of our Board of Directors. We offer our condolences to Barbara and her family.

We regret to inform you of the death of David Walters, who died on July 15, 2007. David was the son of Kathryn Daggy, devoted volunteer of this organization and Secretary of the Board of Directors. David was an actor and a musician whose career took him all over the country. During the past year of his illness he lived with his mother. Our love and support go out to Kitty.

CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

The membership structure of OCPHS has been revised so that all memberships will be due on July 1, 2008. If you are currently a member, you will receive notice when your membership is up for renewal, at which time you will be informed what your dues will be to be extended to July 1. New members will also have their dues pro-rated for the new expiration date. Everyone will receive a renewal letter before the expiration date of July 1, 2008.

New fee structure:

Student:	\$15.00
Individual:	\$20.00
Family/Couple:	\$35.00 (children under 18)
Non-Profit:	\$20.00
Patron:	\$100.00
Benefactor:	\$200.00
Friends of OCPHS:	\$500.00
Corporate Sponsor:	\$500.00

All members will continue to receive four issues of the *Gazette*.

Friends of OCPHS will have their names listed in each issue of the *Gazette*.

Corporate sponsors will have a business card publicity announcement in each of four issues of the *Gazette*.

FRIENDS OF OCPHS:

Amy & Bruce Annett, Jr.
Barbara & Keith Bennett
Nancy & Guy Duffield
Gaylor Forman
Miriam Foxman
Rex Lamoreaux
Jo & Larry Pate

Anyone is welcome to join our supporters with a donation of \$500 or more in unrestricted funds.

CORPORATE SPONSOR



Judie Erwin
Manager

5105 Highland Rd
Waterford MI 48327
Office: (248)674-1380
Fax: (248)674-1807
judie_erwin@flagstar.com
www.flagstar.com

GRANT RECEIVED

We are pleased to have received a grant from the Lula C. Wilson Trust in the amount of \$1,000 to be used for operating purposes.

NEW MEMBERS

Katherine Davis of Pontiac
Norman Nichols of Pontiac
Phyllis Hanna of Waldport, Oregon
Ann Johnson of Manistique
Chuck Spadafore of Waterford
Linda Wells of Macomb County
Larry Keehn of Waterford
Marilyn Wilson of Lake Orion
Pamela Warren of Troy

WELCOME ALL !!

UPCOMING COUNTY EVENTS

Wednesday, September 12, 2007 – **“Nurturing Our Heritage”** sponsored by Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services, to be held at Oakland University’s Oakland Center & Meadow Brook Hall, Rochester. Contact Julie Skene 248.858.5437

Woodward Avenue, which runs from Detroit through Pontiac, is celebrating its 200th Anniversary with **Hands Along Woodward** on Sunday, August 19, at 2 pm. The goal is to have all communities come together to hold hands in one 27-mile chain from Hart Plaza in Detroit to Pontiac. This event will kick off the many activities that are scheduled to celebrate this historic event. To register your neighbors, friends, and family to participate, contact Woodward Action Association: 248.288.2004.

Archaeological Day is scheduled for November 10, 2007, from 9 am to 3 pm at Oakland University Student Center. OCPHS will be a co-sponsor of the event. Contact Richard Stamps for further information: 248.375.0246 or 248.370.2425

Arts Beats & Eats is Labor Day weekend – August 31 through September 3, 2007. OCPHS has a beverage booth to man each year and we ALWAYS need additional help. Please call our office to volunteer, and leave your name and phone number if no one is available to answer. We will return your call. 248.338.6732. There will be a sign-up sheet in the carriage house office.

OCPHS is planning a program with Goldner Walsh Nursery for sometime in October 2007. We hope to have a program on **Victorian House Plants**. Plans will be finalized by the middle of August.

OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFERS TOURS OF THE BUILDINGS IN OUR COMPLEX. Put together a group – 6 or more – and make an appointment to see a part of the history of our county – and state. Some of the groups that have been through recently are the **Red Hat Ladies, Oakland County Genealogical Society, Pontiac Garden Club,** and many others.

One of our most recent visiting groups was from Russia. Charlie Martinez wrote the following about the experience:

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Pine Grove officials rolled out the red carpet for 16 Russian visitors, their translators and hosts who recently toured the Governor Wisner mansion and grounds in Pontiac.

This visit was the end product of Friendship Force of Greater Detroit, part of a worldwide network known as Friendship Force International. As a non-profit exchange organization, members are dedicated to the principle that each person can make a contribution to global goodwill.

The Russian tourists were residents of Rostov-on-Don, an industrial, scientific and cultural center on the river Don approximately 1,226 kilometers south of Moscow. It claims a population of 1.5 million.

During their stop, the visitors took particular interest in the mansion’s parlor where Governor Wisner (1859-1861) and members of the Michigan legislature discussed slavery issues, states rights and the impending Civil War. They were fascinated with the signature of Abraham Lincoln on a document that appointed Pontiac lawyer, Thomas J. Drake, associate justice to the Supreme Court for the Territory of Utah in 1862. Drake, who handled this difficult position for many years, later founded the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society in 1874. Through a translator the Russians said they were well aware of Lincoln’s role in U.S. history from their studies of our Civil War.

This group continued their visit to Niagara Falls, Boston and New York before returning to Moscow. The Pine Grove guides who interpreted this designated State and National Historic site for the Russians were Janice Bell, Rodger Zeller and Charles Martinez.

FOCUS: PONTIAC

Pontiac has so much history to explore, so many people to remember, so many special events to recall that we feel this newsletter is the place to start gathering all the various pieces of Pontiac in the early years that made it a vibrant city, and share them with you.

We will have guest writers, excerpts from some of our Oral History tapes, interviews with long-time residents and anything else we can find to help define the success of early Pontiac. Maybe, just maybe, we can help spark a city with some of the enthusiasm of the early days.

What do you want to know? Who do you want to know about? What good times do you remember? What are significant events of the growing-up years of the city? Do you have information to share with us?

Starting the series with the next issue of the *Gazette* we will focus on Michael Crofoot. We found in our attic a large canvas portrait of him, and one thing led to another: Crofoot building in downtown Pontiac, Crofoot elementary school, his activity in construction of the Asylum. We invite our readers to contribute to this project. How many of you went to Crofoot school? What other information can you offer?

Call me with your ideas and suggestions:
Jo Pate 248.645.1087 e-mail: bjpate30@aol.com

TREASURES FOR SALE

Among the small treasures we have found during our clean-up/clean-out project is a small book entitled *We Dine on Linen Damask*, published in 1926 by the Irish & Scottish Linen Damask Guild, Inc. The following excerpts are from the forward by Emily Post:

We dine on linen damask. This is merely a statement of fact – if the house in which we are dining be a perfectly appointed one. Furthermore, if our own house be one of dignity, we breakfast on linen damask. The dignity of dinner demands a linen tablecloth, and if meticulous, its demand is not for lace incrustated with needlework but for damask without embellishment other than its quality.

As an example of bad taste, nothing could exceed a certain feature film, that in one of its scenes attempted to show a fashionable and luxurious dinner table. Any one knowing anything at all could see that the over-trimmed tablecloth was of such tawdry cheapness that no woman of taste could possibly be willing to give it house room.

This slim volume is for sale in our gift shop.

We have uncovered a composite photo of the Thomas Whitmore family reunion with a caption on the front of the photo "**Oakland Farm Reunion**". Some of the women are wearing banners that say "Clarkston". The picture is about 9" high and 53" long. OCPHS will digitize and retain an image. Perhaps someone in the family would be interested in purchasing it.

SPECIAL BOOKS FOR SALE

Our History & Remembrance of Pleasant Lake, written by Gina N. and Robert S. Gregory of West Bloomfield is for sale. 153 images, 98 pages and a 2-hour DVD are included in the \$10. price. Order by mail: Robert Gregory, 5522 Blue Jay Way, West Bloomfield, MI, or by form available through the *Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society*: www.gwbhs.com.

Pontiac Township (1827 – 1983) The End of an Era, written by Natalie Kilmer Randall and reprinted by the Auburn Hills Historical Society is the story of Pontiac Township before it became Auburn Hills. The price is

\$10. and can be ordered from Wilson Garner, 2644 N. Squirrel Rd. Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Postcard History Series, Pontiac, Michigan - A Postcard Album, by Gottfried Brieger has been reprinted and is now available at OCPHS library for \$20. It can be ordered by mail. A check for \$22, made out to OCPHS, and sent to 405 Cesar E. Chavez, Pontiac, MI 48342. The additional \$2.00 covers postage.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following are profiles of three of the directors of this organization.



Mike Willis is the new president of OCPHS, or I should say a returning president, as he has previously served in this office for several years. Mike is descended from the Edgar C. Glenn and Nelson E. Willis families, who were originally from

Ireland and came to this country about 1652, settling in North Carolina and Kentucky. They moved to Pontiac about 1930 because of the jobs in the auto industry.

Before retiring he worked as a private investigator and politician and had been a Deputy Mayor of the City of Pontiac. He has always been involved in community activities, having served on many appointed boards. Mike was a city commissioner and councilman in Pontiac for 12 years. He currently is a member of the North End Association, Elks Lodge #810, Michigan Planning Officials, and president of the Pontiac Seniors Club.

Mike joined OCPHS in 1994 and had served on the finance and building committees before being elected vice president in 1998 and then President in 1999. He was re-elected to the presidency this past May.

In his spare time he enjoys woodworking, gardening, golf and bowling. He and his wife, Gayle, have 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. He is currently in training for the Senior Golf Olympics.

His interest in family history and the preservation of historic homes brought him to this society. His continuing interest is in being among the dedicated residents working to bring back the once vibrant town of Pontiac.

Gaylor Forman was born and raised in Bloomfield Township and is related to many lines of early settlers of Oakland County, such as Pickering, Harman, Purdy, Stoll and Hutchinson.



The Forman family owned acreage in Bloomfield Township – all of which was surveyed by Hervey Parke, an early surveyor of historic prominence. Gaylor attended the historic Wing Lake School and Baldwin High School. He remembers Miss Genevieve

Horslund as a very harsh teacher. After high school he worked for his family on the Forman Fruit Farms of Bloomfield and Groveland townships. There was no question as to what his career was to be. Gaylor says he was never a difficult child, never smoked, drank, or chased girls – although he did swear once in a while.

For many years he was a director for the Franklin Cemetery and a trustee for the Southfield United Presbyterian church. He likes to hunt and fish and maintains a fishing camp “up north.”

He joined OCPHS in the 1960's and has been on the Board of Directors since 1977. He is devoted to the society's mission of preservation of the history of Oakland County, and Gaylor's deep roots in this area have been a source of pride for him – and for us.

Miriam Foxman was born in Massachusetts, raised in Ohio, and attended college in Michigan. She and her husband, Daniel raised 3 children before Miriam enrolled at Oakland University and earned a degree in education. She taught in the West Bloomfield School district until 1983, when she retired.



In the 1960's Miriam was working with a friend who told her about the Pioneer Society, but Miriam had heard that the organization was just for descendants of pioneers; but, on hearing that it was open to all who were interested in history, she joined, and has

been a member ever since.

She is one of the docents for tours of our buildings and grounds, and her specialty is the schoolhouse. She is often referred to as our “schoolmarm.” She was elected to the board of directors in 1983 and served as secretary for several years. She was chairman of the guide committee at one time. She has also volunteered in the library, worked on the newsletter, interviewed for the oral histories, and initiated the “History Lady” program, visiting classrooms throughout the county, with lessons on local history.

Her honors include Outstanding Volunteer of Michigan in 1984, past president of the Thirty Second Red Arrow Veterans Association, past president of American Legion Red Arrow Auxiliary #361, past president of Red Arrow

Club of Detroit. She continues an active role as a volunteer at the Holocaust Memorial Center.

Miriam spends her winters in Florida and volunteers at the middle school in New Smyrna Beach. In her spare time (?) she knits, reads, works crossword puzzles.

Miriam has three children, three granddaughters and several grandchildren.

She is a joy to be around. She is enthusiastic about all she does and is willing to help in any project, regardless of its size or scope. Miriam is one of our treasures.

COMMITTEE NOTES

The Library has received a scanner that is capable of transferring our photograph collection to computers. Now, the long process has started which is to collect all the photographs stored in attics, basement, shelves, and drawers, identify them and put them into a database.

The Clean-Up/Clean-Out committee continues to go through the years of accumulation of materials and to determine what is necessary to our society's mission and focus, and what can be given to other historical organizations to fill in their collections. An excess of empty picture frames is available in the gift shop.

Our Promotion and Publicity committee, led by new board member, Brian Golden, and volunteer, Julia Bauder, has the OCPHS website up and running. They will be working on new brochures, promotion materials and on-line publicity to let the world know what we have to offer.

With the generous support of General Motors, we have our parking grounds fenced and locked.

THE YEAR WAS 1906....

There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.

Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

**OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
Pontiac Michigan 48342

Phone: 248.338.6732
Fax: 248.338.6731
E-mail: office@ocphs.org

Non-Profit Org.
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Pontiac, MI

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society

Name _____

Street _____ Apt. No _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Check here if gift membership from: _____

**MEMBERSHIPS ARE FOR ONE YEAR, FROM JULY 1
TO JULY 1 OF EACH YEAR.**

- Student.....\$15.00
- Individual.....\$20.00
- Family (children under 18).....\$35.00
- Non-Profit organizations..... \$20.00
- Patron.....\$100.00
- Benefactor.....\$200.00
- Friends of OCPHS.....\$500.00
- Corporate Sponsor.....\$500.00

Check desired membership category and enclose with this application and check or money order made payable to Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society and mail to above address.

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY HOURS

**TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY
11 AM – 4 PM
Please call before coming in**

**WISNER HOUSE TOURS
by appointment**

**GROUPS WELCOME
Call for information
248.338.6732**