



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Our library is open for research only on Wednesdays and Thursdays. There may be cars in the parking lot and people around, but there will be no librarian to assist you. Please save yourself time and disappointment by only coming on the stated days or by making special arrangements with our librarian, Fran Wilson.

OCPHS CALENDAR

Sun. April 18 – Small Talk with Bill Powers: Stone Structures of Southeastern Michigan. 2:00 p.m.
Free admission, donations accepted; public is welcome.

Wed. April 21 – Board meeting 9:30 a.m.

Sat. May 22 – **ANNUAL MEETING AT PINE GROVE**
All members are encouraged to attend for a short business meeting and election of directors, followed by a special program to recognize some of our longest-serving volunteers and members. Special recognition will go to Mike Willis and Kathryn Daggy who will be stepping down after many years of dedicated service as our president and secretary. Refreshments will be served. 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Public is welcome.

Wed. June 16 – Board meeting 9:30 a.m.

Sat. July 17 – Board meeting 9:30 a.m.

Sat. July 31 – **SUMMER SOCIAL AT PINE GROVE**
Sunday, August 1 (rain date) (details will follow)

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD

Members of OCPHS who are interested in running for the Board of Directors may contact this office for further procedural information. The term of office is normally for three years; however, to keep the Board balanced there are sometimes one or two-year terms available. Board members are expected to chair a committee, serve on other committees if possible, and attend and participate in as many events as possible.

SMALL TALKS

The Small Talks held over the last few months at Pine Grove were enthusiastically received by members and

guests. We have another one scheduled for April (see insert). If you know a great speaker and interesting program idea you would like to share, please contact us. Also, if you would like a program on a special subject, let us know that, too.

CONSUMERS ENERGY FOUNDATION GRANT

The Consumers Energy Foundation has notified us that we will receive a \$3,000 grant in support of our proposal to improve environmental controls in the Wisner home. Humidity, temperature, light, and air quality all affect the condition of the historic home and its artifacts. "It is part of our mission to care for the Wisner home", said Mike Willis, OCPHS president. "Proper environmental controls are needed so that the Wisner home and artifacts are here for future generations to enjoy. We want to limit or prevent mold, water damage, cracking plaster, peeling wallpaper, and other problems that an improper environment can create. The Foundation's award will help us address critical issues." Thank you, Consumers Energy Foundation, for your help in preserving the past for the enrichment of future generations.

STAY IN TOUCH VIA EMAIL!

We'd like to ensure that our members receive periodic emails about upcoming events, programs, and activities, but in the fast-paced electronic world, email addresses come and go. A recent test emailing to our membership showed that many of the addresses we have on file were invalid. Please take a minute to send your name and current email to ocphs@sbcglobal.net to be sure you're included on our membership communication list! We look forward to improving our service and interaction with you via the internet!

WISNER SCHOOL ATTENDEES

The Wisner School was built in 1911, and has had as many as 700 children enrolled in a single year. Ninety nine years later, the school is boarded up and unusable. This society would like to hear from any people who were students at Wisner School at any point in time. We may put together a reunion some time in the future. Contact us with names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses.

Jot down your memories – we will need them!

UPCOMING OAKLAND COUNTY EVENTS

Saturday, March 20 – **Notable Women of Pontiac**
Pontiac Public Library, 60 E. Pike St., Pontiac

Saturday, April 10 – Oakland County Historical Round
Table meeting 10 – 12 at Milford Historical Society.
Contact Sue Bullard in Milford, 248-685-7308.

Saturday, May 1 – Oakland County Historical
Commission at the Bloomfield Township Library
9:30 – 12:30. Interested persons invited to attend.

Saturday, July 24 – Pontiac City Garden Tour, 9:30 – 4.

NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Duffy - Birmingham
Lynette Lenn – Bloomfield Hills
Sawyer West – West Bloomfield
Maybelle Fraser - Berkley
Ronda Wickham – Midland
Jerri Fancher – Pontiac
Katy Taylor – Waterford
Katie Annett - Waterford

Lynette is also a new volunteer in the library.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amy Annett – Waterford (Treasurer)
Bruce Annett – Waterford
Kathryn Daggy – Auburn Hills (Secretary)
Guy Duffield – Waterford (2nd Vice President)
Gaylor Forman – Bloomfield Hills
Brian Golden – Farmington
Judith Hudalla – Waterford
Annalee Kennedy – Sylvan Lake
Charles Martinez – West Bloomfield
Robert Nelson – Waterford
Joan Pate – Bloomfield Hills
Richard Stamps – Rochester Hills
Michael West – Bloomfield Hills (1st Vice President)
Michael Willis – Pontiac (President)
Rodger K. Zeller – Waterford

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Until further notice, the library will be open for research on Wednesdays and Thursdays only. These are the days on which librarians will be in to help researchers. Ours is a closed stack research library, so it is necessary to have a librarian present to bring materials to research. There is a \$5 daily charge for non-members to research. There is no charge for members.

Our library staff has new volunteers who are learning where to find materials. Reida Gardiner lives in Bloomfield Township, and is a retired librarian from the Pontiac School District, whose last position was at

Pontiac Northern High School. She has a Masters Degree in Library Science from Wayne State University and brings a lot of experience to OCPHS, and is helping to reorganize some of our materials for easier access. She is present on Wednesdays to help, along with veteran librarian and excellent researcher, Joan Hayes, and Geoff Brieger, retired Oakland University professor, who is organizing the map and photo collections.

Our second new library staff person is Dave Walls, who grew up in Sylvan Village, attended Daniel Whitfield School, Washington Jr. High, and two years at Pontiac Central. His family then moved and he graduated from West Bloomfield High in 1965. Dave retired from Michigan Bell in 1996, and then worked for XO Communications, retiring in December 2009. He is related to many original settlers in Oakland County, including James Walls, Benjamin Cole, Isaac Laing, Erastus Durkee, Robert McBride, and Alexander Solts. Dave will be working with Guy Duffield on Thursdays, and is particularly interested in plat maps.

Lenora Lighthall, treasurer of the Pontiac Garden Club, is coming on Wednesdays to work on getting our research notebooks in order. We are happy to have her with us.

Two university students are also helping with library projects. Ronni Martz has been cataloging the schoolbooks in the one-room schoolhouse, and is putting them on a database for us. She is a student at Oakland University, and has two small boys. Lynette Lenn is a LIS student at Wayne State and is working with Oral History materials. Her goal is to get them transcribed, preserved and into a readable form for research (see the insert to this issue of the Gazette for a transcription of an early interview with Mrs. Carrie Kath). Last fall Lynette created a presentation for one of her classes at WSU about our library, its collection, and its need for help.



**Reida Gardiner – Fran Wilson – Joan Hayes –
Dave Walls – Lynette Lenn – Geoff Brieger**

This library staff picture was taken by Mary Connell and Anne Liimatta.

Unfortunately Guy Duffield is missing from the photo. He is one of our best librarians/researchers. He is an avid Civil War buff, an authority on old cars (he has two classic cars: a 1936 Ford 5-window coupe with a rumble seat, and a 1975 Caprice convertible). Guy is an excellent researcher for old Pontiac businesses. Guy is in charge on Thursdays.

Our library needs a complete copy of the 1908 Plat Map book. Ours is missing some of the township maps. If you have a copy and want it to have a good home, we would be grateful for your donation.

Think Spring!!

Fran Wilson, Librarian
MLS – Wayne State University

WISNER HOUSE MAINTENANCE

The repairs and maintenance of the historic Wisner House are ongoing and constant. We had to deal with mold on books in the house library; broken windows; dead trees that needed removing, and so on. Now, we probably will need a new roof on the house. The current roof is at least 35 years old and is deteriorating. There have been leaks in the house, which have been repaired; however, the overriding problem remains. We will need financial aid in the near future to preserve our beautiful house.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We need volunteers at the society! Here are a few choices – training, if required, will be provided. Contact us if you are interested.

Docents: Tour guides learn the history of the Wisner home, family, outbuildings and grounds, and conduct tours for children and adults who visit. Spring tours are just around the corner, but there is time to learn what is needed to help in this critical area. This is an as-needed commitment.

Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Volunteers will help plan and run the May 22 Annual Meeting, described elsewhere in this newsletter. This would be a short-term but much-needed commitment, and a great opportunity to get to know fellow supporters of the society.

Clerical Help: We need people who are attentive to detail and could assist our membership committee and treasurer with clerical tasks. These might include posting dues payments, renewals and new memberships into our data base; tracking volunteer hours, recording donations, preparing thank you notes and dues acknowledgements, filing, copying, distributing mail and

email, organizing bulk mailings, recording receipts and payments, and other clerical tasks. Computer knowledge is helpful but attention to detail and a willingness to learn are most important.

Summer Social Volunteers: Our annual summer event is on July 31, but we invite your commitment to bake, guide, or volunteer on or before the big day!

Civil War Sesquicentennial Planning Committee: 2011 will mark 150 years since the start of the Civil War. Our society and many other groups will commemorate this most important part of our shared American heritage. Please let us know if you would like to help plan the programming, exhibits, events, or other information that we will share to commemorate the Civil War. We will be planning a Civil War calendar, and perhaps a booklet of Civil War letters from our collection.

248.338.6732
Fax: 248.338.6731
Email: office@ocphs.org

NOTES FOR THOSE WHO TAKE LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY

1. Save the whales. Collect the whole set.
2. A day without sunshine is, like, dark.
3. Remember, half the people you know are below average
4. Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow.
5. Ok, so what's the speed of dark?
6. Support bacteria. They're the only culture some people have
7. 42.7 percent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
8. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
9. Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened.
10. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
11. When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
12. If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments
13. On the other hand, you have different fingers.

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. CARRIE KATH

Carrie Kath and her husband were caretakers for Pine Grove for 35 years. She was interviewed 27 April, 1981, and the tape has been preserved. This edited transcription gives a new outlook on the Wisner home.

Carrie Kath was born in Cross Village, Michigan June 27, 1896. She came to Oakland County in 1918. Her husband came to Pontiac to work for General Motors. For one and one half years they lived on Central street, then in 1920 they moved to Pine Grove as caretakers. They had one boy, Vernon, when they moved in; Maynard was born in this house. They lived in the older section of the house but Mrs. Florence Wallace gave them permission to use any or all of the house as they needed.

This interview is not in Mrs. Kath's words, but as recorded by the interviewer.

The old part of the house was heated by a coal stove in the den. Later, that was converted to oil. I am not clear where the den was. I think it may have been what is now the volunteer kitchen. She (Mrs. Kath) said the door to the basement (she called it the cellar) was just as it is now. Another door on the left led to the bathroom

Mrs. Kath said the stairway was turned the other way and led upstairs where there were two bedrooms. One bedroom was used by her boys; the other was a guest room. That is all she said about the upstairs. Nothing about the little room we use for storage or the open space.

On the main floor, what is now the library, was two rooms...a living room and a dining room. The office was their bedroom where their son Maynard was born in 1925. (I am aware that date does not line up with moving into the house in 1920 with the new baby and the fact that the children were just two years apart. That is what is on the tape.)

A door led through a closed (walled) in hall or breezeway to the summer kitchen. She used the summer kitchen for laundry. Actually, Mrs. Kath took in laundry from Mrs. Ward Strong of Orchard Lake. She said she had a tub and scrubbed on a laundry board. They had a cistern with a pump in the summer kitchen. Mrs. Wallace's kitchen which was the first room on the left as you enter the dining area of the house, did have running water, or at least it had water.

The Kath's lived at Pine Grove until 1952.

Additional information on the tape:

Edward Wallace owned a store across from Hudson's in Detroit, so he and Florence only used Pine Grove on weekends. Later they sold the store and moved out to Pine Grove. Their main residence was on Richardson in Detroit. Mrs. Wallace was a very energetic person. She worked actively in the barns and the house. She was not afraid to get dirty. She always called Mrs. Kath "Mrs. Kath".

Mrs. Wallace belonged to a lodge and when she entertained, she prepared all the food herself. The Kath family used the root cellar. There was a chicken coop next to the root cellar and once when Mr. Kath was cleaning it out he found 3 quarts of whiskey in the straw. There was a garden from where the privy is to the Wisner School. There were lots of trees and berries and a miniature golf course on the school property. Mrs. Wallace permitted the Kath's to use all of the property.

Some of her friends were Bernice Parks, Perry and Rose Aspinwall and Iva Davis who came out from Detroit to visit often. There was also an uncle from Detroit who visited and Betty Howell and Florence took trips together.

Mrs. Dunn Wallace, Sr., would come out from Detroit in a chauffeured car. She was well-dressed and very sophisticated. She was from the R.G. Dunn Cigar Company family.

(Kath interview, continued)

There was no electricity in the house in 1920. They had gas lamps but only for a short while before electricity was installed. Mrs. Kath wasn't sure just when that was. The parlor was usually closed off. Mrs. Wallace did not use the table to write on. The secretary was not in the room, but the horsehair sofa and the bust of Moses were. Mrs. Kath would sometimes play the piano. The carpet and wallpaper are the original.

The Dawson-Brown room (I think this is the office), was originally Mr. Clark's room. His bed was in the right hand corner and there was a commode, also. Mr. Clark was a "jolly old fellow" with a round face and grey hair. He was a banker and stayed in this room when they came out from Detroit. In fact, he died in this room with Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Kath and a nurse in attendance.

The entrance room was the family parlor or living room. There was a table in the center, a needlepoint chair and a Boston rocker. Sometimes they used the fireplace but not often.

The Pot Pourri shop (now the gift shop) was a bedroom. Mr. Wallace slept there. There was no heat in that room, but it was always a bedroom.

In the dining room was a door that led to the greenhouse (which is gone). The door is still there. Mrs. Wallace had dinner parties in the dining room. The room off the dining room which is nearest the other part of the house was her kitchen. She had a gas stove in there. The other room was a bedroom. The "john" was outside.

There were steam radiators when they first lived in the house.

The upstairs play room was a storage room. The back room was Mrs. Wallace's. This was very much like it was with the sewing machine and all. Water had to be carried upstairs.

The library was the same, but had more books. The closet at the end of the hall was for clothes storage.

The front bedroom had the sleigh bed there, but not the commode or shaving stand. This room was used as a guest room.

Anecdotes and odd facts:

Mr. Kath mowed the lawn. He had two ponies which he hitched to the lawn mower. The ponies belonged to the Kath's and stayed in the barn. The Kath boys picked up pine cones. There was an ice house and Vernon Kath had a picture of it.

The barn was full of carriages. There were lots of pines still here, although some had been taken down. Mrs. Kath said there were now only two of the original pines left. Mr. Adams put up the flag pole. Mrs. Kath said Abraham Lincoln had come to the house. Mrs. Kath tells of cleaning the hall closet on a hot day. Clothes had been in there for years and young Clark Wallace took them out and shook them and out came moths. He was delighted and said, "Look at the butterflies".

A lot of weddings and receptions were held at Pine Grove. Mrs. Kath's niece Luella O'Brien was married in the parlor. Mrs. Wallace "did" the wedding. She and Mrs. Kath went to Drayton Plains to pick arborvitae. They made an archway of that and there were two large palms in the parlor. The bride descended the stairs to the wedding march played on the phonograph. Only immediate family was present. The niece had one girl. Her husband, Sam Moore, was killed in the war. Bernice O'Brien had her wedding reception at Pine Grove. She lived in Cross Village.

Pauline and Maynard had their reception at Pine Grove and someone wore the top hat in the entry hall. Mrs. Kath moved from Pine Grove in 1952.

Some of this information is at odds with the current knowledge of the house, contents, and people, but keep in mind that it is as one person remembered it, and therefore is valid in its own perspective.

This is a continuation of early membership records of Oakland County Pioneer Society; a forerunner of the current Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.

EARLY MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

FILLINGHAM, Nancy L.; *nee* Nancy L. Montle; resident of 50 Washington Street, Pontiac; born October 20, 1850 Vienna, Genesee County; settled in Highland 1857; became a member 1923; father: Charles Montle, mother: Laura McLean. (Additional information on form: *lived with Gardner Williams 7 years.*)

FISHER, Josephine; resident of 199 Oakland Avenue, Pontiac; born June 23, 1840 Rennslerville (?), Green County, New York; settled in Independence 1869; farmer by trade; became a member 1910.

FISHER, Martin; resident of Pontiac; born Aug. 2 1847 Independence; became a member February 22, 1910; farmer by trade.

FISHER, Lizzie, *nee* Lizzie Decker; resident of 86 Seminole, Pontiac; born May 9, 1852 Pontiac; became a member February 22, 1915

FISHER, L. W.; resident of 86 Seminole, Pontiac; born August 8 1865 Pontiac; became a member February 22, 1915; retired farmer.

GALE, Alfred; born Waterford December 2, 1878; farmer by trade; became a member February 22, 1928; father: William Gale; mother: Martha Haines. (Additional remarks: *Supervisor of Waterford.*)

GALE, Lena, *nee* Lena Bartlett; resident of Waterford; born June 8, 1887 Pontiac; became a member February 22, 1928; father: Chas. S. Bartlett; mother: Carrie Osmun.

GIBBS, Adrian; resident of Troy; born July 12, 1847 Southfield; settled in Troy 1848; farmer by trade.

GOODALE, Moses; resident of Royal Oak; born January 10, 1839 Troy; settled in Royal Oak May 25, 1914; became a member February 22, 1919.

GRALEY, Mrs. Lewis, *nee* Gertrude Bailey; resident of Bloomfield; born March 16, 1883 Belle River, Ontario, Canada; settled in Troy March 1, 1884; became a member February 22, 1915.

GREEN, H. W.; resident of Orchard Lake; born June 30, 1855 West Bloomfield; became a member February 20, 1911; farmer by trade.

GREEN, Mrs. H. W., *nee* Susie E. Taylor; resident of Orchard Lake; born March 6, 1855 West Bloomfield; became a member February 20, 1911.

GREEN, Mrs. Hartwell, *nee* Mary J. Annett; resident of Orchard Lake; born February 28, 1829, West Bloomfield; became a member February 22, 1911.

GREEN, James Mosher; resident of Pontiac; born June 8, 1859 West Bloomfield; settled in Waterford 1917; farmer by trade; became a member 1928; father: James Green; mother: Mary M. Mosher.

GREENHALGH, Mrs. Joseph W., *nee* Katharine Dickie; resident of 315 Voorheis Road, Pontiac; born August 2, 1882 White Lake Township; became a member 1920; father: William Burns Dickie; mother: Harriet Malcolm.

GREER, Geo.; resident of Pontiac; born August 30, 1851 Burton, Genesee County; farmer by trade; became a member February 22, 1913.

GRIGGS, A. G.; resident of Avon; born February 21, 1855 Eagle, Wyoming Co., North Dakota(?); settled in Avon 1865; farmer by trade; became a member 1910.

GROW, Joseph B.; resident of Royal Oak; born December 19, 1844 Waterford; farmer by trade; became a member February 23, 1914.

EARLY MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

HALL, John; resident of 99 Norton Avenue, Pontiac; born July 23, 1843 Stalybridge, Lancashire, England; settled in Pontiac 1868; became a member February 22, 1910; machinist by trade.

HARRISON, Ellen L., *nee* Ellen L. Jenell; resident of Pontiac; born 1847 Pontiac; became a member 1911.

HAWTHORN, Robt.; resident of Royal Oak; born March 6, 1844, County Down, Ireland; settled in Troy 1849; farmer by trade; became a member February 22, 1910.

HETH, John N.; resident of Birmingham; born April 11, 1852 Southfield.

HEWITT, L. Virginia, *nee* L. Virginia Carpenter; resident of 204 Oakland Avenue, Birmingham; born September 23, 1870, Southampton, Virginia; settled in Michigan 1909; became a member February 22, 1928; father: Seymour C. Carpenter; mother: Carolyn Rogers.

HILLSINGER, Wm.; resident of Royal Oak; born August 20, 1854 Germany; settled in Royal Oak 1874; became a member February 22, 1915; real estate business.

HOLUR, L. J.; resident of Pontiac; born 1853 New York; settled in Pontiac 1859; plumber by trade.

HOLUR, Sarah A., *nee* Sarah Harrison; resident of Pontiac; born 1858 Paw Paw, Vanburen County, Michigan.

HOUGHTON, L. L.; resident of Birmingham; born October 12, 1837 Onga(?) County, New York; settled in Fenton, Genesee Co., 1840; retired minister; became a member February 22, 1917.

KEITH, J.H.; resident of West Bloomfield; born March 1, 1861 West Bloomfield; farmer by trade; became a member February 22, 1915.

KING, Fred; resident of Bloomfield; settled in Bloomfield 1866; became a member February 2, 1916.

LAISEURING, Willis; resident of Pontiac; born Windsor, Eaton County; from Jackson to Pontiac 1898; pharmacist by trade; became a member 1912.

LAICH, John; resident of Royal Oak; born Royal Oak 9 March 1849; carpenter by trade; became a member February 22, 1915.

LEACH, Mrs. James, *nee* Effie Ostrander; resident of 14 Paddock Street, Pontiac; born May 12, 1864 Saginaw, became a member February 22, 1910.

LAISEURING, Mrs. Willis, *nee* Jurine (?) Burke; resident of Pontiac; born Detroit, Wayne County; from Jackson to Pontiac 1898; became a member 1912.

LeBARON, Dr. R.; resident of Pontiac; born June 27, 1838 Alabama, Genesee County, New York; settled in Pontiac 1864; physician and surgeon; became a member February 22, 1912.

LOOK, Hon. H.M., Sr.; born December 27, 1804 Onida (sic) County, New York; settled in Lapeer in 1834 and moved to Avon, Oakland County 1854; Justice of Peace of Avon; Probate Judge & President of Village of Rochester; died August 1, 1887, Rochester; became a member August 1, 1887. (*Note: same membership and death date on the record form*)

LOVEJOY, Charles E.; resident of Milford; born March 20, 1852, Milford; retired merchant; current business Real Estate and Insurance; became a member February 23, 1914.

MARSH, Amy M., *nee* Amy M. Kingsbury; resident of Pontiac; born January 23, 1858 Camden, Loraine County, Ohio; became a member February 22, 1915.

MARSH, E. W.; resident of Pontiac; born November 4, 1847 Glastonbury, Sommerset, England; settled in Farmington 1848; carpenter and farmer; became a member February 22, 1915.

Small Talk

Sunday April 18, 2010

2 PM



Stone Structures of Southeastern Michigan

The masonry techniques, preservation as well as the functions of these buildings will be discussed.

Presented by Bill Powers, an architectural historian who recently completed his MS in Historic Preservation. Bill is a member of OCPHS.

Program held in the one room schoolhouse.

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society

405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.

Pontiac, MI 48342

248-338-6732

www.ocphs.org

No admission charge. Donations accepted

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society
at Moses Wisner's *Pine Grove*
405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
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248-338-6732 office@ocphs.org www.ocphs.org

Strategic Plan Review

Special Evening Meeting: April 20, 6:00 p.m.

With the assistance of the Detroit Executive Service Corps, we undertook an intensive review of our Society and issues important to its future success. We updated our mission and vision statements, identified key issues, and created action plans for tackling specific objectives over the next three years. Headed by OCPHS 1st Vice President Mike West, the strategic plan is important to the Society's future. Join us in the school house **Tuesday evening, April 20 at 6:00 p.m.** for a review of the OCPHS strategic plan.

This special meeting replaces our traditional April daytime board meeting.
All directors, members, and interested friends should attend!

*Oakland County Pioneer
and Historical Society
405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Pontiac, MI 48342*

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In This Issue:

<i>Library Hours</i>	1
<i>OCPHS Calendar</i>	1
<i>Nominations for Board</i>	1
<i>Small Talks</i>	1
<i>Consumers Energy Grant</i>	1
<i>Email Contact</i>	1
<i>Wisner School Attendees</i>	1
<i>Oakland County Events</i>	2
<i>New Members</i>	2
<i>Board of Directors</i>	2
<i>Library News</i>	2
<i>Wisner House Maintenance</i>	3
<i>Volunteer Opportunities</i>	3
<i>Notes</i>	3
<i>Interview with Mrs. Kath</i>	4
<i>Members 100 Years Ago</i>	6