



The only publication dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County

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THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Pontiac, Michigan 48342

February 2011

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER:  
2010 YEAR END REVIEW, 2011 GOALS**

We have GOOD NEWS to report to our members:  
**2010 WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR FOR OCPHS.**  
Here is a quick overview of the year:

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Our Strategic Plan was completed and, last spring, we immediately began its implementation. We focused upon three key goals:

*Increase membership  
Focus on core revenue generators  
Increase visibility*

**MEMBERSHIP**

Our Membership Committee, led by Mary Connell, achieved great results: **98 NEW MEMBERS!** Our membership is now 300 strong. A *Meet and Greet* session on Jan 25<sup>th</sup> helped our new members learn more about the Society and volunteer opportunities.

**CORE ACTIVITIES/REVENUE GENERATORS**

This was another area with good results.

*Summer Social led by Rodger Zeller* achieved record breaking attendance and revenue. It was a great day with over 22 activities offering fun for the family and interest to the historian.

*Small Talks led by Bill Powers* had six sessions and, again, produced record attendance and revenue.

*Victorian Open House led by Anne Liimatta* also brought more visitors and revenue for this event than we have seen in recent years.

**OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

*Ice House Dig led by Carol Egbo and Rich Stamps* uncovered a piece of the Wisner past, generated a lot of interest with our tours, and got us important newspaper visibility.

Images of America: Pontiac, *by Ron Gay in partnership with OCPHS:* Ron began this project with support from Mike Willis and worked closely with Ray Henry, Geoff Brieger, and Charlie Martinez to bring it to fruition in July. The publication of this

pictorial history of Pontiac, Michigan furthered our mission of helping to promote Oakland County history while featuring many photographs from our archives.

*Committee Work:* As we move forward, new opportunities arise and committees have been formed to steer these activities. The following members have volunteered to chair these committees:

Fund Raising: Donna Mallonen  
Gardens: Jackie Tobbe  
Maintenance: Guy Duffield  
Membership: Mary Connell  
Small Talks: Bill Powers  
Summer Social: Rodger Zeller  
Victorian Open House: Anne Liimatta  
Wisner House: Ray Henry  
Docents: Rodger Zeller

Committees and activities like Website and Technology, the *Gazette*, Exhibits, Marketing, and Tour Promotion are currently in need of leaders and helpers—if you are interested in these or other opportunities to lend your talents, let us know!

**DONOR SUPPORT**

The generosity of new donors and the continuing support of regulars played a crucial role in 2010. Two grants to improve environmental conditions in the Wisner Home, from Consumers Energy Foundation and the William & Myrtle Hess Trust, were successfully solicited by Mike Willis, Emilie Hurley, and Judy Hudalla. The Lula C. Wilson Trust answered Amy Annett's proposal with another year of funding for community outreach.

George McGregor's pledges for membership matching and publicity funds led to growth and visibility. Significant financial support came from the Duffields, Adlers, Pates, Annetts, Liimattas, Bob Nelson, Gaylor Forman, the Kimball family, and many other long-time members. Please know that every dollar counts, and every dollar is appreciated.

(Continued on next page)

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont'd):**

**YEAR END FINANCIAL STANDING**

Our treasurer, Amy Annett, tabulates the results of our activities and reports that for 2010, we had an **operating surplus of \$6,900**. Most of the financial categories that we measure showed an increase over last year. The leaders were Events, Donations, and Membership. We are well positioned to enter 2011 with its challenges and opportunities.

**A COUPLE OF SPEED BUMPS**

We did encounter a couple of problems during the year which were traced to a neighborhood vandal. The Wisner House Committee (Ray Henry, Bill Powers, Donna Mallonen and Melissa Luginski) have stepped up to the tasks this created and, during your next trip to Pine Grove, you will see the preliminary steps to **putting a new roof on the Wisner House and enhancing security**.

Several years ago roof replacement was identified as a "must do." So, on the positive side, we now have the "opportunity" to launch that project. This will not be inexpensive. Donna Mallonen has formed a Fund Raising Committee and is vigorously pursuing grants from foundations, businesses and financial institutions. To kick start that campaign, **Bob Nelson has pledged \$1,000**. We are facing our challenges head on.

**2011 GOALS**

The objective for 2011 is to continue the success that was generated in 2010. These are our goals:

- Fund/Install Wisner House Roof*
- Complete Security Improvements*
- Build our Tour Program*
- Continue Implementing the Strategic Plan:*
  - Expand membership and volunteer corps
  - Support core activities/revenue sources
  - Increase visibility

**SUMMARY**

It is gratifying to present a year-end report filled with superlatives like "record breaking" and "great results." However, the key factor driving the success of OCPHS was and is the core group of members who completed the many jobs and, in the process, made it a most enjoyable 2010.



We look forward to 2011 and welcome aboard the new members who will help our society, founded in 1874, continue to thrive.

Best Regards,  
Mike West, President

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

As noted in the President's letter, 98 new members joined our ranks in 2010, and another joined in January 2011! Here are those who have not been listed in a previous issue of the *Gazette*:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Alle, David  | Clarkston          |
| Archer, Mike & Kary  | Clarkston          |
| Bond, Linda  | Waterford          |
| Broderick, Elliott   | Clarkston          |
| Claus, Charles   | Clarkston          |
| Cote, Sara   | Waterford          |
| Cross, Cheryl  | Bloomfield Hills   |
| Davis, Mary  | Auburn Hills       |
| DeMarco, Carole  | West Bloomfield    |
| DePiero, Roberta   | Key West, FL       |
| Elkins, Julie  | Howell             |
| Greene, Christina  | Waterford          |
| Greene, Diane  | Waterford          |
| Hoffman, Catherine   | Waterford          |
| Hunt, Audrey & Roger                                       | Waterford          |
| Karaguleff, Nicholas & Jane                                | West Bloomfield    |
| Kelley, Lisa   | Waterford          |
| Kramer, Chuck  | Birmingham         |
| Litt, Eleanor Smith (personal and non-profit organization) | Farmington Hills   |
| Mares, Elizabeth   | Oxford             |
| Madvin, Jenifer  | Birmingham         |
| McGillivray, Miriam (Patty)                                | Bloomfield Hills   |
| McGregor, George   | Hendersonville, NC |
| Motdoch, Susan   | Clarkston          |
| Nance, Dee   | Waterford          |
| Nissen, Eric   | Traverse City      |
| Ray, Lois  | Harvest, AL        |
| Ray, Roger   | Harvest, AL        |
| Reid, N. Gail  | Waterford          |
| Ritchie, Elizabeth   | Kent, CT           |
| Silver, Shari  | Beverly Hills      |
| Simons, Margaret   | Edwardsville, IL   |
| Smith, Gary  | Birmingham         |
| Turnbull, Craig  | Birmingham         |
| Turnbull, Scot   | Beverly Hills      |

**MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN EXTENDED**

Based on the success of the membership dues matching campaign begun last summer, donor George McGregor has invited us to extend this incentive program into 2011. Originally the matching campaign was to end on Dec. 31, 2010, but now it will continue to apply to new memberships until we reach the full value of George's pledge. To make the most of this generous gift, we invite you to encourage your non-member friends and relatives to join today. Thanks, George, and thank you, our ambassadors!

**ATTENTION ALL QUILTERS**  
**Mary Connell Wants You!**

I would like to hold a meeting in February for those who quilt or like to sew and would be interested in making a Civil War soldiers quilt. During the War, women decided to assist with the need for soldiers' bedding. The military had requested quilts of about 7 feet by 4 feet, a convenient size for cots and bed rolls. Many quilts were made from existing materials, but as the War dragged on, materials had to be purchased. By the end of the War it is estimated that some 250,000 quilts and comforters were made for the Union soldiers.\*

If you are interested in helping to make one of these quilts, please give me a call and leave a message. I have purchased the pattern, it looks easy, and if you can sew you can quilt! We can tie them instead of quilting. Several of the quilt shops have Civil War reproduction materials or we can use our own scraps. I am looking forward to a fun time, so hope you can join us.

Contact Mary at 248-338-6732 or office@ocphs.org

\*<http://www.quilting101.com/styles/civil-war-quilts.html>

**THE GAZETTE IN TRANSITION**  
**Best wishes to Jo and Larry Pate**

After many years writing and editing this publication, Jo Pate has stepped down to assist her husband Larry as he recovers from recent surgery. Jo and Larry are long time volunteers, members, and supporters of OCPHS, as well as being really nice people. In Florida for the winter, we look forward to their return to Michigan and to their continued involvement with our organization.

Although Jo seldom took credit for her part in producing the *Gazette*, she has firmly believed in its importance in keeping our membership informed and interested in the society's activities. In the membership survey we conducted last year, we asked about our various activities and programs. The *Gazette* received the highest ranking of all, with nearly two-thirds of respondents giving it top honors.

In this time of transition, we welcome your comments or ideas as to how we can continue publishing a newsletter worthy of your attention. Those interested in contributing to its writing or editing are welcome to get involved. Send us your comments, or submit your ideas for stories, historical features, or format. Jo, your shoes will be hard to fill, but we send our thanks and our best wishes to you and Larry for all you've done for OCPHS.

**UPCOMING SMALL TALKS**

Join us for our continuing series of *Small Talks*, informal, engaging programs on topics of historical interest.

**Sunday, March 20:**

***Moses and Angeolina Wisner: a Civil War Family*** presented by Ann Johnson. Ann is a descendant of Moses Wisner and an active OCPHS member and volunteer. She will speak about the Wisner family, Pine Grove, and the inspirational aspects of Moses Wisner's life, tragically cut short by typhoid fever during the Civil War.



**Sunday April 3:**

***History of Old Fort Wayne*** with Dave Jamroz Dave is a volunteer at the old Fort and co-author of the book *Images of America: Detroit's Historic Fort Wayne*. This fort was used as a training camp for Civil War volunteers and a place of muster for regiments before being sent into areas of conflict.

**Sunday April 10:**

***West Point Graduates from Michigan and the Detroit area who Served at Fort Wayne***

Dave Jamroz returns to share more information about the Fort and the men who served, including Pontiac's Major General Israel Bush Richardson. Come and hear about the tie-in with Fort Sumter and the role of our esteemed leaders and soldiers.

All programs begin at 2 p.m. in the Carriage House. Seating is limited and available first come, first served. Admission: \$5 for the Small Talks, \$5 for optional tours of Pine Grove immediately following. No charge to new members who join on the day of the event. Come support your historical society, meet new people, and learn something new!

**Editor's Note:** *The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society adopted a new mission statement in June 2010. It begins, "The role of our society is to preserve and convey the contribution of Oakland County in the evolution of American History." In the following article, historian Charlie Martinez answers that call, placing the dramatic events of 150 years ago into local context.*

### **AT THE CHASM'S BRINK**

By Charles H. Martinez

The recent tragic shootings of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and others in Arizona and accompanying rhetoric from the ideological Right and Left have reduced our nation's body politic to a state of paranoia. This anxiety attack coincides with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. While most recall the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter as the opening salute to a four year bloodbath, the steps that brought us to that juncture are more elusive. A summation of those events set on a local stage might give us a better understanding of the county's frailties then and now.

The same year Oakland County was organized in the Territory of Michigan, the historic Missouri Compromise of 1820 was reached. There were 22 states in the Union then and they were equally divided over the admission of Missouri as a slave state. A compromise was accomplished when Maine was admitted as a free state and Missouri came in as a slave but with slavery prohibited in adjacent lands of the Louisiana Territory. Resentment between the North and South was somewhat diminished by this action but hardly eradicated. Thomas Jefferson wrote at the time that the continued bad faith was like a "fire bell in the night." This slow but steady weakening in the spirit of nationalism to the benefit of sectionalism would ultimately result in the Civil War.

In 1837 Michigan entered the Union as its 26<sup>th</sup> state. Rich in minerals and water resources with plenty of fertile inexpensive land, Michigan leaders favored economic, political and social policies that would benefit their young rural dependent enterprise. New settlers and reliable transportation routes were top growth priorities.

By contrast the Deep South enjoyed a one-crop agricultural economy set on sprawling plantations with a ready supply of slave labor. Southerners generally opposed tariffs on imports because they purchased numerous manufactured goods from Great Britain. They also preferred a state banking system over a national one for cheap money purposes. The South disliked immigration since new labor tended to settle up North, which gave that

sector greater political power. By the same token, internal improvements were not sought as they tended to unite North and West sections against them.

The South's greatest rival was found in the Northeast corner of the nation. There a well-established industrial society was situated with capital, skilled labor, mechanical equipment and the basic natural resources to keep things humming. The Northeast desired a high protective tariff to retard foreign competition, and a national bank for a strong currency as well as credit to build new factories. This section supported internal improvements and immigration, but opposed the extension of slavery on economic and religious grounds which would check Southern political strength in Congress.

As sectionalism worked its divisive will upon the nation, Oakland County, and its seat of government in Pontiac, grew slowly but steadily. Platted in 1818 along an oxbow bend in the Clinton River by the Pontiac Land Company, the little settlement obtained village status in 1837. Eventually its cluster of shops, stores, mills, and hotels would be joined by two rival newspapers: *The Pontiac Jacksonian* (1838), a fierce Democratic party voice, and the *Pontiac Gazette* (1845), a champion of Whig coalition causes.

The Democratic party had a strong appeal to frontiersmen, small store owners and farmers. Its hero was Andrew Jackson, 7<sup>th</sup> president of the United States who had defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. The party supported states rights and a strict construction of the Constitution while opposing a national bank and high tariffs.

The Whigs (1834-1854) drew their name from an English group who had opposed King George during the American Revolution. The reborn Whigs sought a strong policy on national economic growth, a protective tariff, and internal aid to commerce through a federally chartered bank. They also made their pitch to the better educated, the more successful businessmen, rather than Jackson's "just plain folks." Here the Whigs became quite brazen, attacking certain immigrant classes and religious minorities as a threat to American harmony and stability. In November of 1844 the *Gazette* asked its Oakland County readers, "Why not change the naturalization laws, why not let the foreign born wait twenty-one years to vote as did the native born, and who else but Americans should rule America."

Another Pontiac location that reverberated with heated political rhetoric was the Oakland County courthouse, erected in 1857 at the corner of Saginaw and Huron streets at the town's core.





Down through the years the courthouse was the scene of numerous notable trials and the focal point of many community activities. Contributing to its popular non-judicial use was a spacious courtroom where school exhibitions, lectures, farmers' meetings, and political gatherings were frequently held. The latter type featured such national figures from North and South as Cassius Clay, John Breckinridge, Schuyler Colfax, and Horace Greeley. Sometimes the debate was so heated and the cause so contentious that the courthouse front steps were chosen as a more prudent setting with the crowd spilling out across the lawn to cheer or jeer the speaker's words.

Another Southern threat to secede from the Union was stalled by the Compromise of 1850. The give and take at this juncture centered around the principle of "popular sovereignty" in the acts establishing the territorial governments of Utah and New Mexico,. It meant any states resulting from these territories should be admitted as slave or free according to the constitution voted for by the people.

The tenor of such foreboding times fortunately produced bold men who arose to the occasion and

took leadership roles in the crises. Two local examples were George and Moses Wisner who were born in Cayuga County, New York and moved to Oakland County in the 1830s. They had many qualities and convictions in common. Both were eloquent speakers who would use their talent in the field of law and politics. The brothers were ardent abolitionists, anti-Masons, and Whig party members..

But there also were differences. Older brother George had a yearning for newspaper writing and publishing. Early in the 1830s he found employment in several Manhattan print shops. With another printer he acquired the *New York Sun* where as a multitasker George became the nation's first crime reporter. Before his death in 1849 he was editor of the *Detroit Advertiser*.

In May 1854 Moses made his political presence felt by quickly speaking out against the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act that repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened the territories to slavery. Two months later Wisner was present "Under the Oaks" in Jackson, Michigan where the Republican party was born and a slate of candidates selected.

At this gathering of anti-slavery men, Wisner was urged to accept the nomination for State Attorney General but declined. Later that year he did run for Congress but was defeated by George W. Peck, the Democratic candidate. In 1855 Wisner praised fellow Republican Governor Kinsley S. Bingham, whom he would eventually follow in that office for enacting a law “to protect the free colored citizen in Michigan from forcible removal from the State as a slave and to punish his kidnapper.”

When John C. Fremont became the first Republican candidate for the office of President, Wisner actively supported him. The State Museum in Lansing has a large poster in its possession from that campaign. It mentions that Wisner was scheduled to address the party faithful on behalf of Fremont in Corunna, Michigan. Such speaking engagements outside Oakland County helped introduce Wisner to a wider audience. This visibility aided his election for Governor two years later.

Wisner’s energy and integrity won for him his party’s nomination for Governor in 1858 by a large majority on the first ballot. His Democratic opponent was Charles E. Stuart who had served in both House and Senate. The *Pontiac Gazette* with some humor presented Wisner as a “farmer-boy” who helped clear the wilderness and went on to become one of the “most successful attorneys in the state.”

Over 121,000 votes were cast in the gubernatorial election. Wisner captured 54 percent of them with a winning margin of 9,134 votes. He carried 35 counties, including three in the Upper Peninsula. In Oakland County Wisner eked out a winning margin with 66 votes, or 50.5 percent of those cast. His home township of Pontiac with its county seat fell to the Democrats by 78 votes. Wisner’s strength was drawn from Troy, Farmington, and Novi Townships.

During Wisner’s single term in office (1859-1861) he was instrumental in enacting a voter registration law requiring every elector to enter his name in the proper township or ward book where he resided. He also pushed for a system of roads to be extended into the more remote parts of the state. This in turn promoted agricultural, mineral, and lumber production. Wisner also brought to the State Legislature’s attention the need for repair of the St. Mary’s ship canal, which facilitated continued development of copper and iron mining in the Upper Peninsula.

Not everyone was pleased with Wisner’s political stance or his achievements in office. At mid-term unidentified individuals burned his stock barn on the family farm in Pontiac. The arsonists mercifully set the blaze after freeing his livestock. In his final address to the Legislature Wisner said, “This is no time for timid or vacillating counsels when the cry of treason is ringing in our ears. Michigan cannot recognize the right of a state to secede from the Union.”

Wisner never retreated from his convictions. He was given command of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment with the rank of Colonel in the summer of 1862. Six months later while in service he would die of typhoid fever in camp at Lexington, Kentucky. A tall marble obelisk marks his grave in Pontiac’s Oak Hill Cemetery. Wisner would join the ranks of hundreds of thousands of men on both sides who perished in that bloody conflict. James Madison, another American patriot, said it best back in 1788: “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”

#### ***HISTORY GROUPS TO SPOTLIGHT CIVIL WAR Sesquicentennial Events Planned for 2011 - 2015***

The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society is just one of many historical groups planning to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War over the next four years. The following are two upcoming programs from other local organizations:

#### ***Michigan in the Civil War, presented by the Bloomfield Historical Society***

Al and Dave Eicher focus on the men and women of Michigan who served the Union cause.

Sunday February 20 3 – 4:30 p.m.

Bloomfield Hills Public Library

1099 Lone Pine Road

Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

248-642-5800

#### ***Oakland Co. Historical Commission Workshop***

Co-sponsored by OCPHS, this workshop features sessions on the Underground Railroad, Civil War sites in Oakland County, and events that led to war.

Saturday April 16 9 a.m. – noon

Oakland University

2200 N. Squirrel Road

Rochester, MI 48309

248-370-2100

**VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE 2010:  
Thoughts and Memories from Anne Liimatta,  
Victorian Christmas Chairwoman**



Adrian Rawls (center) with docents Kathryn Daggy, Brian Golden, Kathy Davis, Jackie Tobbe

Judy Hudalla comes to mind immediately. There from the first moment, she attended every meeting, shopped the dollar store from day one to bring in items of importance for the coming event: Fire wands, tuna cans, milk cartons, pretzel bowls, napkins, plastic plates, tea lights, pine cones and baskets, Santa's bag, camera and printer for Santa's photos, many new donated items for the gift shop, mailings, great ideas, her little red car pulling into the parking lot week after week. With cheerful spirit she calmly assisted wherever possible. On the big day she handled sales at the gift shop as it quickly became the busiest place on the property, and Judy, you looked beautiful in olive green fleece with golden Christmas tree light bulb earrings. ☺



Judy Hudalla runs the Gift Shop

There was the tall and handsome grounds crew, dressed for the weather, who rotated all day to welcome our visitors and patrol the property! We thank Eghele Egbo, Bruce Annett, Dave Walls, Frank Liimatta and Jim McDonald for directing our guests and their vehicles in great style - no car damage or slip and fall accidents - God is good! In particular new member Jim McDonald, who came right at noon, was the first of all volunteers to appear. He opened the parking lot gates just in time for the other workers to arrive and get to the back corner. This was a good plan since the rest of the field was loaded during the day. Jim worked outside for seven hours, directing parking, patrolling grounds and locking the gate after the last car left. That belonged to ticket master Amy who was outside almost all day and amazingly did not turn into an ice cube. She stayed until the last penny was recorded with a final figure of just around \$1600! We humbly and gratefully report that one third of this was due to the fabulous sponsorship of Gaylor Forman!



Amy Annett at the Gate

Joan Hayes was the most courageous and organized of members and first to volunteer to be in charge of a big aspect of the day: The refreshments! Little did she know that the carriage house would be crammed for four hours with hungry children and admiring parents as the fourth graders from two Waterford schools arrived to tour, meet Victorian Santa Geoff Brieger and perform in the Christmas play! Did she realize what she was getting into? Good thing husband Bob was there for support along with the lady guides who gave up their free hours to assist with food. I hear Lynette Lenn saved the day, but I have yet to get the full story!



With the jolly Church Street Singers, the hot cocoa and hundreds of homemade cookies, any problems encountered did not seem to bother the guests. Singing, socializing and treats were the order of the day as people moved around the room taking turns at the tables and chairs. The decorations and music created a great holiday feel in the newly-reconfigured carriage house. I was sure happy for the extra space we have in there now, and it was nice that Guy Duffield and Maybelle Fraser had the farm museum open downstairs to ease the traffic just enough.



Santa Geoff Brieger, ready for his next visitor

This brings me to docents. They are in a category all their own! The docents run the show! Without them there is no reason for the advertising, the parking, the decorations, the food. They share the collection. They transmit the history and make it come alive for young and old. They have to perform, to dress up, to face the crowd. They answer questions, stand on their feet for hours, stay enthusiastic and smile! Rodger Zeller is their selfless and exemplary leader.

While I probably can't name each of you here, I love you every one and want to ask you to keep the fires burning. Continue to participate in any tours for which you can make time. Those will be on Small Talk Sundays and hopefully at more frequent visits from schools in the area. I must mention Catherine Hoffman and Reida Gardiner, newly trained docents who looked beautiful in costume. They jumped in with courageous effort, were friendly and probably creative at times as they met the constant waves of children and families that came through the upstairs bedrooms. I am so proud of you!



Lynette Lenn, docent and assistant hostess

Nancy Duffield and Bill Powers did the excellent tour of the upstairs hallway, sharing all the Wisner family information, Wisner library and Civil War history. Brian Golden, Kathryn Daggy, and Jackie Tobbe were the Wisner family.

We have our own reenactment team, and nobody does it better than Brian as Moses! Brian, I can still see you standing proudly in front of the family room fireplace with the spotlight shining down on your formal figure! Thank you for being there the whole day and reading your rendition of *The Night Before Christmas!*



The Wisner Family: Brian Golden, Jackie Tobbe, Ryan Johnson

I'll give special mention to Charlie Martinez and Ryan Johnson in the military room, which is so tiny but so important. We must never forget that the Civil War is pivotal as to why this home was preserved by Mrs. Wisner, who lost her dear and talented husband in the prime of his life as he led his volunteer regiment into the fight to stop slavery and save the Union.



Ryan Johnson came to work despite his college semester finals and we hope he aced them all. Mom Ann came down from Manistique, provided breaks for docents, bought a beautiful pine basket decoration and looked great in black. She also brought fudge from Mackinaw for the guests. Ann and Ryan are honest-to-goodness Wisner descendants, too!

A big success this year was the staging of the school house play. Mrs. Cyporyn and Mrs. Nuckolls are true professionals in the Waterford School District and we have Carol Egbo to thank for finding them. Their students were excited and learned their lines very well. I wish you all could have seen at least one performance, but you would have had to hang from the ceiling! Just ask Bob Nelson and Ray Lucas who were guides in there!

Parents and siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles sat shoulder to shoulder through the rehearsals and the performances without blinking an eye, and the photos they took of their children before, during and after looked like a red carpet shoot! Story, staging, props, music, dialog and crowd all came together in a very exciting way for the children. This will certainly be a Pine Grove memory that will live in their little hearts for a looong time!



Bob Nelson and Guy Duffield at work

Finally, a feat of special mention was the cleaning, reworking and holiday decorating of the mansion dining room by the House Management Committee. We all could have learned a lesson or two from them as flies on the wall, but we would have been removed dead or alive! Dishes and lamp globes were washed, walls were dusted from top to bottom, all the silver plate was polished with special Henry Ford Museum products, superfluous glass was cleared, and only the best examples of Wisner and period artifacts were shown.



House Managers: Bill Powers, Donna Mallonen, Ray Henry

Together Ray Henry, Donna Mallonen and Bill Powers created all live decorations, the most amazing of which were the sugared fruit compotes and the orange/clove balls. Mrs. Wisner would have been so proud! We can imagine family spirits still in the room enjoying the activities, but none quite so lovely as the carol sing in the formal parlor at the end of the day.



Ray Henry at the piano

After two hours playing gorgeous music on Mrs. Wisner's piano, Ray went through verse after verse of over 20 carols in the romantically lit room with its tall, glistening Christmas tree. Those present knew it was a magical time. Lucky Rodger, Kathy, Mary, Santa Geoff, Moses and Jessie Wisner, Mike West, Fred and I, among others, were blessed to be there. With us were a retired Pontiac School teacher and her mother, who at 92 was probably the oldest and happiest guest we entertained this year. During those closing moments of the day, I had no trouble assuring myself that a good time was had by all!

Here's heartfelt and sincere thanks to all of you who participated in making this day happen, including everyone who attended or bought tickets and sponsorships. There's still Mary Connell with advertising, Kathy Davis (jack of all trades), Guy and Bob up on the ladder draping and lighting the porch pillars with beautiful cedar rope, Bill spending hundreds of dollars and hours of his time the last week in decorating the house, Nik Karaguleff ringing the barn yard bell, my husband Fred and our family running the treasures sale, and Margaret Jackson's timeless performance bringing to life Moses Wisner Bear and Grandma Finlay.



Anne Liimatta (captured in a rare moment sitting down) with some crew members. Thank you Anne, for your energy, leadership, and devotion to this event –Ed.

If you think we could have used more people to help with all this, you are right! So stay tuned for other great fund raising celebrations planned for 2011 and beyond, especially as we commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the War Between the States over the next four years. Plan to be part of the work and the fun and you will be warmly welcomed into the OCPHS group of active volunteers.

Save the date: 2011 Victorian Open House: Dec. 10

### **NEW MEMBER MEET & GREET**

34 of our members gathered on Tuesday evening, January 25 to get acquainted with one another and to learn about the many volunteer opportunities available for those wishing to become more involved at Pine Grove. Brian Golden, reprising his role as Moses Wisner, greeted guests and acted as Master of Ceremonies. Hostesses Mary Connell and Anne Liimatta prepared an inviting setting for the early evening affair, and some of our active "regulars" spoke briefly about the roles they play in helping the society operate, inviting those present to lend their time and talents as well. Invitations were sent to each of the 98 members who joined in 2010, but both new and "seasoned" members are welcome to contact us to learn more about jumping on the volunteer bandwagon. Nothing is accomplished without the help of people just like you who share their skills and interests. Join us!

### **THE SCHOOL HOUSE IN WINTER**



Donna Mallonen took this tranquil shot of the Drayton Plains one room school, appearing much the same as it could have during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **SUMMER SOCIAL 2011**

If summertime is more to your liking than the chilly scene above, mark your calendars for this year's Summer Social, Saturday, July 30 from 12 – 4 p.m. Planning meetings will begin in February. Those who would like to serve on the committee may call or email the office to leave a message for Rodger Zeller, event chairman. We will have a theme related to the memory of the Civil War, as 2011 marks the sesquicentennial anniversary of that historic conflict. Come and bring your ideas!

### **IN REMEMBRANCE: RICHARD POOLE**

Richard Poole, who served as our president in 1968, passed away last year, survived by his wife and other family members. We send our condolences and our gratitude for his service as a leader and lifelong supporter of this society.

## Membership Application

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society

Memberships run until July 1 of each year

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone

Email

Already belong? Consider giving a gift membership or inviting a friend to join, too! Everyone is welcome.

Check if a Gift Membership

From:

What prompted you to join? (Optional)  
(Check all that apply)

- Interest in History
- Invited/Introduced by Member/Friend
- Copy of Gazette
- Attended Event or Tour
- Research Library
- Newspaper/Magazine Article
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Website
- Other

Membership Categories:

- \$15 Student
- \$20 Individual
- \$20 Non-Profit Organization
- \$35 Family (2 adults & minor children)
- \$100 Patron
- \$200 Benefactor
- \$500 Friends of OCPHS
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor
- \$Additional Donation Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to OCPHS and mail with a copy of this form to:

**OCPHS**  
**405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave**  
**Pontiac, MI 48342**

For your convenience you may also join or renew on-line via credit card or Pay Pal at [www.ocphs.org](http://www.ocphs.org). Thank you for your support!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone

Email

Your skills or interests:

The following is a list of areas you may find of interest. Feel free to submit this form or to contact us at any time if you would like to volunteer or to learn more. We will respond as quickly as possible.

### Committee

Acquisitions  
Financial and Data Collection  
Funding  
Gardens  
Gift Shop  
Ice House Project  
Library  
Grounds and Maintenance  
Publicity, Quilting  
Small Talks  
Summer Social, Tour Guides  
House Committee  
Victorian Open House

### Contact

Geoff Brieger  
Amy Annett  
Donna Mallonen  
Jackie Tobbe  
Judy Hudalla  
Carol Egbo  
Fran Wilson  
Guy Duffield  
Mary Connell  
Bill Powers  
Rodger Zeller  
Ray Henry  
Anne Liimatta

### Open areas that may pique your interest:

Exhibits & Museum Displays,  
Tour Promotion, Marketing,  
Website, Technology & Electronic Communication,  
Youth Activities, Community Outreach  
Programming

**OCPHS**  
**405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave**  
**Pontiac, MI 48342**

Thank you for offering your time and talents!

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

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Information, story ideas, or comments are welcome.

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