



Vol. 47, No. 1

Dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County, Michigan

Mar. 2014

THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.

Pontiac, Michigan 48342

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Email: office@ocphs.orgWeb: www.ocphs.org**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

By Brian Golden



In spite of the weather, we are moving forward with many activities. These are activities you might want to be involved with. Here are some things we are doing to ensure sustainability and visibility:

There is a new fund raising committee focused on keeping us going into the future. Headed up by Fred

Liimatta and Bill Clink, the group meets Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. They are planning an auction on April 1, but don't be fooled thinking we don't need your help. When it comes to fund raising, the more the merrier!

Kathy Davis has planned another exciting year of Small Talks on select Sundays at 2 p.m. These presentations cover interesting topics and have been appreciated by hundreds since the series began.

We've had many new memberships already this year. Be sure to tell your friends and relatives about the benefits of membership. Everyone is welcome.

As we compile our 2013 annual report and draw closer to our annual meeting in May, we're mindful of the variety of roles on our board of directors. If you are interested in exploring running for the board, please contact Sara in our office and she will turn your name over to our nominating committee.

Event chairman Rodger Zeller is gearing up for the Summer Social on July 26. Planning meetings begin Tuesday, March 4 at 9:30 a.m. Contact Sara for future meeting dates and times.

Remember our research library is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to help you discover more about the county's people, places, and events.

Recently we joined the Pontiac Downtown Business Association and MotorCities National Heritage Area, an affiliate of the National Parks Service. Leaders from the Pontiac Optimist Club and Grace Centers of Hope

visited our campus. Working together creates opportunities for us to get to know others who, like us, are helping to enhance life in Oakland County.

Participation in our organization is a great way to help pass along the richness of our heritage and history. See you at Pine Grove,

Brian Golden bgolden@pastways.info 248-701-8112

AUCTION APRIL 1: FAST, FURIOUS, FRED!

Board member Fred Liimatta will bring his talents to the auction block on Tuesday evening, April 1, when we host a lively fund raiser in the Carriage House. Spring really is coming (no fooling) so this is a perfect time to do a little house cleaning and help support OCPHS.

Come for the preview and light refreshments at 6:30 p.m. and prepare to start bidding at 7:00 p.m. There will be no advance sales, but we will post information about select offerings on our website, www.ocphs.org.



Wings cigarette poster, donated for sale

To make the auction a success, we need you—and your stuff, like the poster at left! We're soliciting donations of unique or collectible items in good repair. Artwork, jewelry, coins, antique toys, dolls, small furnishings, knick knacks, books, tools, you name it—variety is the spice of life and the key to a good auction!

Items may be dropped off on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., or call Fred at 248-931-3583 to arrange for pickup if necessary. All donations are tax-deductible in accordance with applicable law, and proceeds from the sale will support the Society. Join us Tuesday April 1!

FUNDING COMMITTEE GOALS: FINANCIAL CAMPAIGNS, AUCTION, VOLUNTEER CORPS
By Bill Clink

It gives me great pleasure to announce the formation of a fund raising committee to plant seeds for the long term stability and growth of Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. The committee is co-chaired by Fred Liimatta, a name you may recognize (his talents are many), and me. By way of introduction, I am a newly active member with extensive experience in non-profit fund raising and donor development, plus a background in corporate operations and residential real estate management. Our committee includes four board members and a group of dedicated volunteers.



Committee members welcomed Grace Centers of Hope leaders to our campus in January. From left: Bill Clink, Rodger Zeller, GCH Development Director Michelle Atwell, GCH Chief Executive Officer Rev. Kent Clark, Kari Vaughan, Mike West, and Sara Guy

Building on the firm foundation made by our past leaders, we hope to grow the volunteer base and develop a consistent stream of income to allow for expanded services to our members and our community. We believe the best way to provide better service is to be accessible, to provide quality experiences for visitors, members, and volunteers, and to be good stewards of the historic resources in our care. Working with the board, we've set goals for:

- ❖ Expanded business hours
- ❖ Professional part-time office and library staff
- ❖ Volunteer recruitment and satisfaction
- ❖ Sustainable funding for operations and historical preservation

How You Can Help

Auction Items: We have already set in place plans for the near future. We will hold an auction on April 1 and we are looking for donated items in salable

condition. (see article, page 1). We are also making plans to enable us to handle donations of real estate and gently used cars.

Volunteer Corps: We would like to compile an updated file of members' areas of interest and skills (see insert) which will allow us to better match your abilities and passions with Society activities. While you may have submitted a volunteer survey in the past, completing the enclosed inventory will help bring me up to speed by including information we haven't assessed before.

Financial Contributions: Your tax-deductible gifts of cash or marketable securities would be greatly appreciated for two campaigns running concurrently. Donations may be made by mail using the form on page 7, or via our website, www.ocphs.org.

Annual Giving is essential for funding our typical operating costs such as utilities, maintenance, office supplies, insurance, security, and the like. This year, we hope to raise \$10,000. This is a stretch goal but not impossible given the generosity of loyal past donors and potential new members and friends.

Bob Nelson

Fill the Gap is a new initiative to garner commitments by April 30 for another \$10,000 in corporate support, member pledges and grants. This campaign will bridge the gap between our current budget and what is required to expand hours, staff, and programs this year. The good news is that we already have a major commitment for this campaign from member and former director Bob Nelson! If you can join Bob in supporting this program with tax refund dollars or other funds, it will help us build on the foundation begun with the 2010 strategic plan and continuing today.



As part of this effort we are reaching out to both our active membership and local businesses and organizations that might be interested in helping us financially or visiting our campus to learn more about our mission. If you have suggestions in these areas please contact me at 248-766-2725 or office manager Sara Guy at 248-338-6732.

We realize that there are many demands on your time and resources so your support—be it through service time, auction items, advice, or good old cash—will help us serve our members and community and care for our beautiful campus and collections while providing for an exciting future! We look forward to growing together.

COUNTY EMPLOYEES DRESS DOWN, BUILD UP! FUND BENEFITS AREA NON-PROFITS



Officers Mike West and Amy Annett represented OCPHS as county executive L. Brooks Patterson welcomed 2013 award recipients.

We are so grateful to be recognized for the second time in the Oakland County government's Casual Day program. County employees voluntarily donate to a fund when they choose to dress down for work, raising thousands of dollars over the course of each year to donate to area non-profits. In December, county executive L. Brooks Patterson presented awards to the seventeen organizations receiving funds for 2013. Thank you, county employees! More information on the organizations and the work they do is available at: http://www.oakgov.com/news/Pages/pr_13_229.aspx

GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY HONORS CHARLIE MARTINEZ

Charlie with Gina Gregory, GWBHS president



At its annual meeting in January, the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) presented Charles H. Martinez with its Distinguished Service Award.

Currently our official historian, Charlie has volunteered with us for more than 40 years and has also been active with GWBHS, for whom he wrote the book, *Song of the Heron: Reflections on the History of West Bloomfield*. Congratulations, Charlie, on this well-deserved recognition!

VIEWPOINTS: FRED LIIMATTA AND BARBARA FRYE SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

Two recent, unrelated email exchanges at Pine Grove prompted responses I felt were important to share with those of you who, like Fred and Barb, care deeply about what happens here at our Society and in the larger realm of historic preservation. With their permission I've reprinted their notes below. — Ed.

Fred Liimatta: Upon word of Bob Nelson's kick-off donation for the *Fill the Gap* campaign (see page 2):

To whom much is given, much is expected. Giving to your grandchildren is easy, the IRS not so much.

Every relationship goes through stages. First the heart is infected with the emotion of love. There is an addiction to the disease that makes you go crazy and start doing irrational stuff. Before you know it you've made a proposal. A covenant for life with that girl you met on campus, at church or at the bar will require more than maybe you were expecting. The problem with being in love? You're so happy you don't know how miserable you are!

The Wisner Home is more like a love affair than a business. We have fallen prey to its charm and intoxicating friendships. We have no choice but to keep on giving.

Thanks, Bob Nelson, for your generous gift.

Barbara Frye: In response to the impact of on-line versus on-site research and its effect on our library:

I am going to heave a heavy sigh here....

The Internet is a wonderful thing. Rather like a four-wheel drive vehicle, you can be amazed where it can go and totally stymied where & when it can get stuck!

Yes, there is an amazing amount of information and documents that has been digitized. However, I feel that is only the tiniest tip of what is available. There is no thrill like that of finding something in an old book or paper that adds to the body of research you are doing on any subject. There is nothing quite so satisfying as holding in your hands the actual written will of your 3rd great grandfather! Finding it on line is one thing, going to the source and actually pulling it from a file cabinet in a court house and touching the piece of paper that he held, is quite another! Digitizing these documents preserves them, but archiving them is, to my way of thinking, much more important. There will always be people who prefer to see the original documents, not a facsimile. The Internet gives us access, but not necessarily the satisfaction of the search.

You cannot pull the plug on a book!

EARLIEST WISNER IMAGE DONATED TO OCPHS

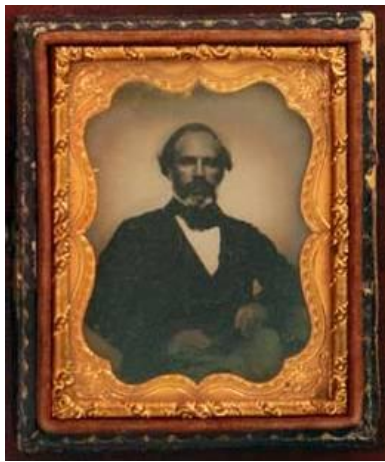
By Charlie Martinez, Society Historian

Below left: Cased ambrotype of Moses Wisner. Photographer and date unknown, but possibly taken circa 1856-60.

Below right: Carte-de-visite (visiting card). Derivative image of ambrotype. Copy made by H. W. Boozer, Grand Rapids, 1873-74.

All good things which exist are the fruits of originality
John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) *On Liberty*, introduction

The earliest known likeness of Michigan's twelfth Governor, Moses Wisner, has been donated to the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society by a family descendant. The gift agreement was signed at Wisner's former homestead, known as Pine Grove, on July 27, 2013 by David C. Wallace, Jr., on behalf of the great-great-grandchildren of Moses Wisner.



The donation consisted of twelve items including two fine examples of nineteenth-century photography which are portraits of Wisner. Society member Cindy Motzenbecker, who is also president of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society, was asked to

examine and identify the process involved in their development.

The Illustrious Ambrotype

Motzenbecker said the first donated image was an encased ambrotype. The image was made by exposing a glass plate coated with light sensitive emulsion. This resulted in a negative image which had a pale tone. To achieve the right balance between light and dark, the plate's back was covered with black paper. Dark paint, black felt or deep purple glass could also be used. This action produced the proper "positive" image. James Ambrose Cutting is credited as the inventor of the ambrotype. The name of this process is drawn from the ancient Greek word *ambrotus* meaning "imperishable." The overall size of this ambrotype's case is two and three-eighths inches by two and seven-eighths inches.

The Popular Carte-de-Visite

The second image was a fine example of a carte-de-visite (visiting card) according to Motzenbecker. In essence, this format was a small albumen print which appeared as a thin paper photograph mounted on somewhat thicker card stock. Andre Adolph Disderi (1819-1889) took out a patent on this arrangement in

1854, as well as the design of a camera that could make eight negatives on a single wet plate. These innovations took the photographic market by storm. Our overall carte-de-visite's size measures two and three-eighths inches by four and one-eighths inches.

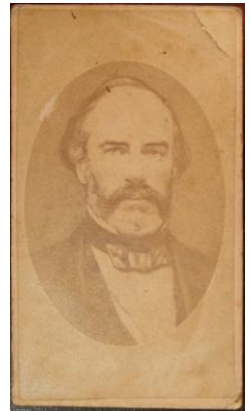
Say "Cheese"

After identifying the processes used in the creation of the two images, attention was focused on the subject's pose. In both photos Wisner sits staring at the camera with a rather austere expression such as one might expect from a successful, practicing criminal attorney or a no nonsense candidate for state governor. This feeling is best captured in the carte-de-visite which is a tight close-up of Wisner's face. In contrast the ambrotype reveals a seated subject from knees to the crown of his head. Photographers call this a "three-quarter" shot. Moses' left arm is bent at the elbow, probably resting on a photographer's prop table, which is hidden under the metal frame surrounding the image. The fingers on the left hand are closed and rest on his left thigh. The right arm, also bent at the elbow, has the fingers extended on the top of the right thigh.

Up Close and Personal

The subject's face, however, is the major point of interest in both images. So, it was decided by the Pine Grove research staff to use a computer to superimpose one facial area over the other to determine whether we had two separate poses or one. The results showed that the carte-de-visite is most likely a derivative of the earlier ambrotype.

For the later "made" carte-de-visite retouching was found in the grey to white patches in Wisner's sideburns and in the goatee area of the beard. The hairline has also been tweaked to lend more exposure to the earlobes. More obvious is the greater definition given to the folds in the bow-tie and its enhanced silken sheen quality. Apparent too is a well-defined border to Wisner's vest; the latter decorated with nearly invisible polka dots.



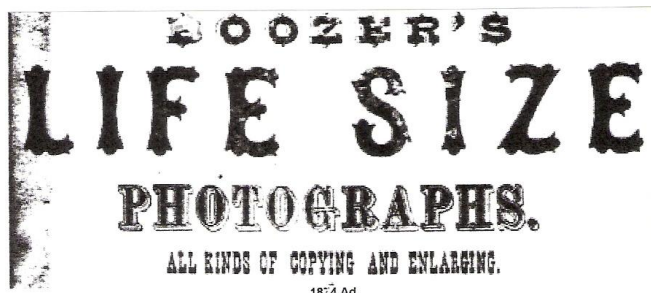
Down To Basics

The final analysis of the two images is an ongoing struggle. It centers on the issues of "who made them" and "when?" The answers could in turn give us the "where?" The ambrotype appears to be a successfully made product which may date back to the latter half of the 1850s. Years have not been kind to this object however. The top case cover which protected the inside image from extraneous light and impact damage is missing. Originally the top and bottom halves of the case were attached by a hinge and were kept closed

by a small metal hook and catch. When the hinge failed on our specimen it appears that an unsuccessful attempt was made to use a cloth hinge with one glued surface as a substitute.

Carte-de-Visite Clues

Although a derivative image in the opinion of the Pine Grove research team, the carte-de-visite has some interesting assets not yet found with the ambrotype. On the reverse surface of the card is a stamped message within a cartouche. It reads: "H. W. Boozer/Photographer/83 Canal St./Second Floor-to the left/Grand Rapids, Mich." Near the other end of the card's reverse is the written name "Moses Wisner." This signature is quite legible and doesn't match his normal style of penmanship which his peers considered nearly undecipherable. Even more ironic is the fact that Wisner, who was well-known as a teetotaler, would have his likeness preserved for posterity by a photographer whose surname is synonymous with drinking to excess.



Henry Boozer proclaimed his skills in an 1874 Michigan Gazetteer

Jack of All Trades

Henry W. Boozer was born in New Jersey in 1831. In his early years he demonstrated a measure of artistic talent in sketching and went on to explore such mediums as pen and ink, pastels and watercolors. Boozer particularly enjoyed portrait work. The burgeoning photographic field blended beautifully with his fine arts background and he set out to master this new form of expression. Not one to hide his talents Boozer began instructing other photographers in the technical aspects of the trade and in the importance of advertising to make their businesses grow. This was done through articles he wrote for U.S. and British trade journals.

In 1859 Boozer married Mary L. Keley, a native of New York. The couple moved to Grand Rapids after the Civil War. By the 1870s that city ranked second in terms of population in Michigan, and had bustling industrial and commercial sites along the banks of the Grand River. Boozer's studio was located at 83 Canal Street for only two years 1873 and 1874; the former being the stamped date on the reverse of Wisner's carte-de-visite. That year also marked the tenth anniversary of Wisner's death from typhoid fever in

Lexington, Kentucky. Coincidence perhaps, but Boozer, a marketing specialist, could hardly ignore the sentimental value of such a salute to a former Governor who gave his life for the Union cause. As far as duplicating the Wisner image, an 1874 advertisement in the *Michigan Gazetteer* proclaimed Boozer's skill in all kinds of "copying and enlarging."

Window of Opportunity

Finally, the most logical time frame for this creation of the ambrotype image of Wisner would fall within the years 1856 and 1860. Wisner took on a political identity in 1854 with the crystallization of the Republican Party at Jackson, Michigan. However, that same year he failed in a bid for Congress and in 1857 lost his party's endorsement for a U.S. Senate seat. Undaunted and with strong Republican backing in 1858, Wisner captured the nomination for Michigan Governor at the party's convention in Detroit. He campaigned vigorously across 17 counties in October and beat the Democratic challenger Charles Stuart. Each political event presented an opportunity to make his face well-known to the public and plenty of photographers were eager to make it happen.

Win Some Lose Some

In 2012 and 2013 Society researchers turned their attention to numerous letters exchanged between Moses and Angeolina during their courtship and marriage years, as well as his Civil War service. This was quite a challenge due to his previously noted horrible handwriting. Nothing was found during the pre-Civil War period that suggested he had posed for a photographic image although we now know he did. In October 1862, while serving as colonel with the 22nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Moses scolded his wife by mail for not sending him a photo of the children. In return he promised to send them a photo of himself, presumably in uniform. Wisner became seriously ill shortly after writing the letter and no evidence has surfaced to support that this exchange ultimately took place. The only candidate for a Wisner war time image came to light under some unusual circumstances in Lexington, Kentucky in 2012. Unfortunately, upon close inspection it proved to be an unconvincing likeness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Society sends its warmest, personal regards to David Wallace, Jr., great-great-grandson of Moses and Angeolina Wisner for his gift of the two subject photographs along with ten 19th century artifacts that speak so eloquently of his heritage and our history. A special thanks as well to the Pine Grove research staff David Walls and Pat Kaltwasser. They were joined on this occasion by Geoff Brieger, Society collections manager; Cindy Motzenbecker, president of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society; Barbara Frye, photographer and graphic artist. And as always a debt of kindness is owed to Sara Guy, Pine Grove's busy office manager, who takes time to help this writer keep his equilibrium.

**To all who visited, sponsored, or helped at
2013 Veterans' Victorian Open House:
WE SALUTE YOU!**



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LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE MARCH 28-29



The Historical Society of Michigan will hold its annual Local History Conference in Sterling Heights on Friday and Saturday, March 28 & 29. The conference features two full days of sessions on various topics, plus an evening reception. Call 800-692-1828 or download the

conference brochure at www.hsmichigan.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following people have joined OCPHS since the last issue of the *Gazette*. Welcome!

Blount, Derek	Royal Oak
Friends of Historical Hamtramck	Hamtramck
Galbraith, Alyssa	White Lake
Grace Centers of Hope	Pontiac
Helton, April	Waterford
Hipol, Linda	Madison Hts.
Johnson, Wesleyann	Holly
Kwiatkowski, John	White Lake
Liimatta, Frank & Libby	Clarkston
West Construction Services	Pontiac

GET WELL WISHES

OCPHS extends its wishes for good health to past president **Mike Willis** and member **Bob Nelson**.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Ralph G. Coulter died Jan. 31, 2014 at age 97. Ralph and his late wife Carolyn Dunlop Coulter were long-time members and boosters of OCPHS.

Robert H. Golden, father of OCPHS president Brian Golden, died on Jan. 15 at the age of 88.

Ann Glover Poole died Feb. 2 at age 85. Ann was the widow of OCPHS past president Richard Poole.

Membership and Donation Form

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Send my *Gazette* by: ☐ U.S. Mail ☐ Email

Please Make Me a Member! (indicate category):
Memberships received now extend until July 1, 2015

- ☐ \$15 Student
- ☐ \$20 Individual
- ☐ \$20 Non-Profit Organization
- ☐ \$35 Family (two adults & minor children)
- ☐ \$100 Patron
- ☐ \$200 Benefactor
- ☐ \$500 Friends
- ☐ \$500 Corporate Sponsor
- ☐ \$ Gift Membership (provide name & contact info):

Please Accept My Donation! (indicate preference):

- ☐ \$ Annual Giving (general operating costs)
- ☐ \$ Fill the Gap (expanding hours & service)
- ☐ \$ Preservation (historic buildings & contents)
- ☐ \$ Where Needed or Other (specify):
- ☐ \$ Memory of / Honor of: (name & contact info)

What prompted your support? (check all that apply):

- ☐ Interest in History
- ☐ Invited/Introduced by Member/Friend
- ☐ Copy of *Gazette*
- ☐ Attended Event or Tour
- ☐ Research Library / Archives
- ☐ Newspaper / Magazine Article
- ☐ Volunteer Opportunities
- ☐ Website / Facebook
- ☐ Other (specify):

Mail this form with check payable to OCPHS to:

OCPHS
405 Cesar E. Chavez Ave
Pontiac, MI 48342

For your convenience you may also join or donate on-line at www.ocphs.org. Thank you for your support!

We are a 501(c) 3 organization
Donations are tax deductible in accordance with applicable law

Gazette 47-1, Mar. 2014

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society
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Pontiac, MI 48342

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SPRING AUCTION!

At Pine Grove,
Moses Wisner's
Historic Estate

Tuesday, April 1
6:30 p.m. preview
7:00 p.m. bidding begins

Now accepting donated items for the sale
Proceeds benefit OCPHS
See front page for details about this fun event!

We are seeking editorial help: Call for info

Oakland Gazette is a publication of the
Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society.
Submissions, story ideas, or comments are welcome.

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Contributors:

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Shirley "Annie" Hunt, Bruce Annett, Historical Society of Michigan

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In Remembrance; Membership / Donation Form
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QR Code; Facebook, Twitter invitation
Insert: Member / Volunteer Survey Form

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

SMALL TALKS, 2 p.m. Sundays as follows:

Mar. 9: *Walt Whitman* with William Grandstaff

Mar. 23: *Macomb County Civil War Footprints* with
Bob & Cherie Allen (rescheduled from 2/23)

Apr. 13: *Titanic* with Larry Hathcock

May 18: *Michigan & the Civil War* with Jack Dempsey

Mar. 14: Gallery on the Boulevard, 7 p.m.

Bruce Annett discusses *Asylum: Pontiac's Grand
Monument from the Gilded Age*. RSVP to the Gallery,
53 Franklin Boulevard, Pontiac; 248-770-7685

Apr. 1: Auction, 6:30 p.m. preview, 7 p.m. sale

Fred Liimatta hosts the bidding wars! See page 1

May 21: Ann'l Meeting, Election & BBQ, 4:30 p.m.

Save the date, details to come



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