



Vol. 47, No. 3

Dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County, Michigan

September 2014

THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Fred Liimatta



Greetings, friends! Hope you're healthy, happy and enjoying the final days of our beautiful summer, soaking up enough sun to make it through the approaching winter. Michigan winters have never been for wimps!

Congratulations to OCPHS, now celebrating its 140<sup>th</sup> year! We look back with thanks for the original pioneers' courage and foresight in providing a means for us to remember where we came from and how we got here.

Pioneers are easy to identify; they're out front, blazing trails, willing to brave the risk of failure to change things for the better. We believe that all of us at OCPHS can and do fit this description! Pine Grove is thriving today.

Stop in any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 11-4 and you will be amazed at the number of vehicles in the parking lot! There are a host of focused individuals whose talents are moving us forward on several fronts. We now have a satellite museum in downtown Pontiac, a growth & development team, a dedicated volunteer library staff, an antique clothing display department and more. Please come in and meet these generous members who are making things happen.

Many activities take place throughout the week: Tours, club meetings, research projects, mailing bees, grounds maintenance, event planning, housework and pleasant conversation. (Continued Page 2)

**OCPHS ANNOUNCES...****"A GRANDE NIGHT TO REMEMBER"**

An Auction Benefiting Pine Grove



Saturday, October 4, 2014

6:00 - 10:00pm

Lafayette Grande Banquet Facility

1 Lafayette, Downtown Pontiac



Tickets \$25/person

Buffet Dinner/Cash Bar

Live Entertainment

Vintage Costume Contest

**LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS***"A cacophony of accoutrements for the abode!"*

- Auctioneer Fred Liimatta



View a growing collection of auction items on  
our Facebook page!



Have an item to donate? Turn your attic  
antique or collectible into a tax deduction by  
calling the office. Pickup available.

**Seating is limited; advance ticket sales only!**

Please call the office today for reservations!

Support OCPHS and enjoy a night on the town!

*(President's Corner continued...)*

When you and your smiling face stop by, you may want to:

- 1) Renew your membership or give a gift
- 2) Stroll the estate with a friend – the autumn scenery is gorgeous!
- 3) Enjoy your lunch on the grounds
- 4) Buy tickets to our first buffet dinner/auction fundraiser in October
- 5) Donate a fabulous item for the auction
- 6) Start your holiday buying at the Gift Shop

In closing, I'm not blind enough to think that the growth and success of OCPHS just happens, as if by some coincidental "poof!" In science as in life, things tend to go from order to disorder – especially when the grandkids come to visit! I live by this prayer that you may have heard: "Lord, grant me the peace to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference." Each generation loves and protects Pine Grove to the best of its ability. I thank you all for continuing her legacy and making the task of walking in the steps of the pioneers so fulfilling!

I am looking forward to the December 7<sup>th</sup> Victorian Christmas Open House where we will honor the heroes who have given and are giving so much – up to the ultimate sacrifice – for a safer world. Mark your calendar for December 7<sup>th</sup>, Pearl Harbor Day, and join us for the holiday fun!

-Fred

P.S. You ain't seen nothing yet!



## **FOUR PLACES TO FIND LOCAL WWI VETERANS**

***Ray Lucas (Library Team)***

**The centennial of World War I is upon us, and I have located over 200 veterans who lived in Troy utilizing these main sources. Those wishing to do research on veterans in their own communities may find them helpful, and some are right here in our library.**

### **1) 1930 Federal Census**

***In the last two columns, individuals could indicate whether they were a veteran and, if so, of which war. The census can be accessed online at Ancestry.com***

### **2) Local Cemeteries**

***The Oakland County Genealogical Society houses lists of individuals buried in local cemeteries, including veterans. Most of these booklets can also be found at the OCPHS library. Online cemetery resources include Interment.net and Find A Grave.***

### **3) "Records of Oakland County Soldiers and Sailors In the Service In the Great War"**

***The OCPHS library is the only place that houses all six volumes of this series. The Archives of Michigan keeps copies on microfilm.***

**4) Organizations such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars  
*These organizations may have information on early members.***

## **SEEKING OAKLAND COUNTY DIRECTORIES**

Can you help the OCPHS library team in their goal to obtain a complete set of Oakland County directories? OCPHS currently houses the 1941 volume and would love to have more, particularly from the World War I era. Please give us a call or write us an email if you can assist!

**From the Growth & Development Team**  
**Bill Clink (Co-Chair)**



Bill and Ralph outside 7 North Saginaw

It is amazing what one can accomplish when a few dedicated individuals set out with prayer and a vision of making a difference in their area! Thanks to the support of OCPHS, the Port Huron Museum and Russ Barr LLC, there is now a Pioneer Pop-Up Museum at 7 North Saginaw in Downtown Pontiac. The theme of the museum display is "Famous Failures and Silver Linings." With Oakland County on the rebound from one of the worst recessions in recent history, our message of the need for "pioneer spirit" to overcome adversity and persevere until successful is right on target with the rehabilitation of Pontiac.

Our grand opening was held in August during the weekend of the Dream Cruise. We hosted over 200 adults and 100 children; not bad for an exhibit that has cost OCPHS less than \$100 in out-of-pocket expenses! The local business community, the mayor of Pontiac and our county commissioner all had high praise for the quality of the exhibit and the inspiring theme. Many thanks to those who pitched in to make our community outreach effort a success! If you haven't stopped by yet, give me a call at 248-766-2725 to set up an appointment for a visit.

We could not have reached so many people had it not been for the newest member of the development team, Ralph the Rooster. Ralph started out in the care of OCPHS office manager Sara Guy, but it soon became clear Ralph was destined for greater things than country life. When it came time to promote the Pioneer Pop-Up Museum, Ralph volunteered his charismatic personality and public relations skills. He spent half of Friday and most of Saturday out on the street drawing attention to the museum. As a

direct result of his service as "Spokes-Rooster" he not only attracted dozens of visitors, he also found a new home. We hope to keep in touch with Ralph and fill you in on his latest adventures at his Facebook page ("Ralph the Rooster"). With the help of society researchers Ralph hopes to have historical posts on his page that can be accessed by members and local educators of elementary school children as a teaching tool for the connected generation.

In closing, if you haven't yet purchased a ticket to our fall auction fundraiser, grab your spouse or a friend and make it two tickets! This is a new initiative to get better acquainted with our members, raise funds for OCPHS and have a fun time promoting Oakland County history. If you cannot join us, please consider assisting us in securing donations. Items such as restaurant meals, bed & breakfast stays, resort vacation packages, professional services, artwork, jewelry and training classes are all desired.

We are well on our way to a great event.  
Best regards!

**OCPHS SUPPORTS GRACE CENTERS OF HOPE AND PONTIAC REVITALIZATION**

On a gorgeous August evening under a full moon, OCPHS board member Linda Porter and office manager Sara Guy received the red carpet treatment at the City Lights auction.

The event, jointly hosted by the Pontiac Downtown Business Association and Grace Centers of Hope, raised funds to support Grace Center's Hands of Hope Childcare Center and the revitalization of Downtown Pontiac. In thanks for Grace Center's support and promotion of our 2014 Summer Social, OCPHS donated a basket of publications, memberships and other services to the silent auction portion of the benefit. Dinner was provided by the Lafayette Market on the rooftop of the Lafayette Place Lofts. We are pleased to support the wonderful initiatives taking place in our community!





**2014 OLD-FASHIONED SUMMER ICE CREAM  
SOCIAL...OUR BEST YET!**

***Rodger Zeller (Planning Committee Chair)***

After months of intense planning, July 26<sup>th</sup> finally arrived. It turned out to be a beautiful day, both weather-wise and event-wise!

The event ran for six hours; we ended up with over 600 in attendance and made a profit of over \$6,000...an increase of about 150 attendees and \$2,000 from the year before.



Reenactors strolling the estate

At 11:30, our opening ceremony was led by veteran honor guards assisted by a Pontiac ROTC group. We had a number of distinguished guests who participated in the ceremony: Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson; Mrs. Deirdre Waterman, Mayor of Pontiac; Mr. Ed Lee, local contractor; and Reverend Kent Clark, head of Grace Centers of Hope.

Every hour the Civil War cannon was fired and the whole area shook! Several Civil War soldiers roamed the grounds. The Sisters of the Union baked cookies in a cast iron dutch oven over a fire for guests to sample at their small encampment.



Brooks Patterson firing first cannon shot of the day

Children enjoyed making simple crafts and getting their faces painted. Spinning tops could also be made to order. At 4:00 a hardy group of kids had a ball learning how to drill with wooden rifles over their shoulders.

The Wisner Mansion was filled with dedicated docents, many in period costume. Lots of

guests wandered through the house and learned a good bit about 19<sup>th</sup> century living.

At 2:00 guests enjoyed an hour of presentations on the Wisner Mansion porch. We heard from Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln. An actual Civil War letter from Private William C. Green was read.

Some serious learning took place in the schoolhouse. Mr. John Gibney, head of the Michigan Sesquicentennial Commission, passed along a wealth of information, particularly about Clara Barton. He was assisted by Tom Berlucchi, head of Historic Fort Wayne in Detroit (the only official Civil War site in Michigan). The schoolhouse was also the site of a quilt display and a photo/biographical exhibit of ten Civil War soldiers from Oakland County. At 3:30, former Pontiac mayor Willie Payne gave a fascinating slideshow presentation on the Underground Railroad in the Pontiac area.



Willie Payne

As folks strolled the grounds, they saw the Oakland County Sheriff's mounted police horse and rider, tasted biscuits baked fresh at the summer kitchen, enjoyed ice cream and cake served by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), partook of hot dogs and cold beverages, and visited with woodworkers, spinners, history authors and local historical societies.



Ray Frase making spinning tops

In all, it proved to be a fun day for those who participated!

(Images courtesy of OCPHS member Joe Cool)



**The 2014 Summer Social was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors; please remember them when you shop! Thank you!!!**

**Business Sponsors**

- \*Hodges Supply (Pontiac)
- \*Meijer (Rochester Hills)
- \*Buckner's Dessert Cafe (Pontiac)
- \*The Crofoot Ballroom (Pontiac)
- \*Cool & Associates (Waterford)
- \*Garrett Door Company (Pontiac)
- \*Leslie Electric (Pontiac)
- \*Mom's Attic (Pontiac)
- \*Take Away Trash (Pontiac)
- \*Michigan Chiropractic Specialists of Waterford
- \*Service Glass Company (Pontiac)
- \*Simply Natural Health Foods (Waterford)
- \*The Daily Diner (Waterford)
- \*Vintage Press Craft Printing (Pontiac)
- \*Downtown 51 Grille (Pontiac)
- \*Real Estate One/Ron Newman (Clarkston)
- \*Stuffed Bun (Pontiac)
- \*Woodward Auto (Pontiac)
- \*Wren Naturals (Goodrich)
- \*Bernie's Best Used Furniture (Waterford)
- \*Cut And Paste Design.com (Mesa, AZ)
- \*Frye Photo (Pontiac)
- \*The Henk Studio (Pontiac)
- \*Lee Industrial Contracting (Pontiac)
- \*Memory Time LLC (Rochester)
- \*R7 Laundry (Pontiac)
- \*Ray Frase, Woodturner (Waterford)
- \*Turner Sanitation (Lake Orion)

**Individual Sponsors**

- \*Gaylor Forman
- \*Charlotte Cooper
- \*Bruce & Amy Annett
- \*Dr. Bruce Henderson
- \*Nik & Jane Karaguleff
- \*Dave & Barb Hendershot
- \*Linda Porter
- \*Reida Gardiner

- \*In memory of Kitty Daggy & Diane Walker (Anne Liimatta)
- \*In memory of Clarke & Marion Kimball (David & Barbara Kimball)
- \*In memory of W.E.C. Huthwaite (Motoko Huthwaite)
- \*In memory of Joseph Leal Jr (Patricia Leal)
- \*In memory of Bob Nelson (Fred Liimatta)
- \*In memory of Mike Willis

**1901 CARRIAGE RETURNS HOME**

113 years after its construction at Pontiac's Standard Vehicle Company, a cherished artifact from the early days of the automotive industry has come home. The carriage, built in 1901 not far down the Saginaw Trail from the Pine Grove estate, was generously donated to OCPHS by the Randy Hammons family of Clear Lake, Wisconsin. On September 15, Vice President Mike West and member Bob Sowles successfully navigated the Chicago-area traffic in Bob's truck and trailer to take delivery of the carriage. A small ceremony was held at the Hammons' Wisconsin farm.

OCPHS is excited about the future of our new acquisition, and it is our goal to honor the Hammons' request that it serve as an educational tool for the people of Pontiac. The carriage will be placed in a temporary climate-controlled facility pending restoration. We are beginning the search for funding sources to restore the artifact, which will include applying for a grant from the Motor Cities National Heritage Area. It will be utilized for visibility in parades and public events, and will be displayed at automotive-related facilities in the area. The carriage will also serve as the jumping-off point for our much-anticipated Pontiac Automotive History Bus Tour, currently in the works. Watch for updates on this project in future newsletters, and ways in which you can be a part of our efforts!



Randy Hammons and his mother Barbara Hammons stand with the carriage at their farm, the carriage's home since the 1950's.

## **REMINDER...MEMBER RENEWALS DUE!**

OCPHS cherishes the support and dedication of each and every one of our members! Please help us achieve our goal of 1,000 members with your membership renewal. Memberships are good until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and can be purchased online, in person at our office or via mail using the form at right.

## **IN REMEMBRANCE**

OCPHS mourns the loss of these dear friends...

**Michael Willis** passed away in July following a difficult battle with cancer. Mike was a volunteer and board member for many years.

He served ten terms as head of the organization - our longest-serving president. Condolences may be sent to Mike's wife Gayle and the family at 556 East Beverly, Pontiac.



Mike with board member and Wisner descendant  
Ann Johnson

**Miriam Foxman**, formerly of Keego Harbor, passed away in June at the age of 93. Miriam received her degree from Oakland University at 40 years old and taught middle school for 18 years. She was a volunteer for 50 years with the American Red Cross, a docent at the Holocaust Memorial Center and our beloved "schoolmarm" here at Pine Grove.

OCPHS also extends condolences to the family of **John P. Harris**, a member in good standing who we were saddened to learn passed away recently.

## **Membership and Donation Form**

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

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

**Please Make Me a Member!** (indicate level):

- ☐ \$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 recipient's name & contact info):

**Please Accept My Donation!** (indicate preference):

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

**What Prompted Your Support?** (check all that apply):

- ☐ Interest in Oakland County History
- ☐ Invited/Introduced by Member/Friend
- ☐ Received 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:

**Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society**  
**405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue**  
**Pontiac, MI 48342**

For your convenience you may also join or donate online at [www.ocphs.org](http://www.ocphs.org). Thank you for your support!

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

OCPHS is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since our last publication:

Anderson, Lillie & Family (West Bloomfield)  
Annett, Emily (Waterford)  
Bailey, Bob (Lake Angelus)  
Bica-Grodsky, Lisa (Troy)  
Bilbey, Linda (Clarkston)  
Cool, Joseph (Waterford)  
Cox, Richard & Family (Lake Orion)  
Dagenhardt, Linda (Holly)  
Decker, Dave (Pontiac)  
Elwell, Nola (Rochester)  
Fishwild, Graham (Waterford)  
Fishwild, Thomas (Waterford)  
Frase, Ray (Waterford)  
Hill, Jane (Oxford)  
Keoleian, Jeff (Farmington Hills)  
Le Duff, Evelyn (Pontiac)  
Morgan, Sherie (Auburn Hills)  
Newman, Ron & Family (Clarkston)  
Payne, Maurine (Clinton Township)  
Roach, Angela (Caro)  
Sleeper, Laurie (Boulder, CO)  
Smith, Leroy (Pontiac)  
Soeder, Bobbie (Pontiac)  
Stanford, Steven (Howell)  
Stephison, Gilbert (Waterford)  
Tedescu, David & Laurel (Wheaton, IL)  
Wilson, Robert & Lorene (Grand Blanc)  
Oakland County Genealogical Society  
(Birmingham)



Enjoying exhibits outside the schoolhouse at the 2014 Summer Social

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events...

#### **Saturday, October 4 -**

"A Grande Night to Remember" Fall Auction

6:00pm – 10:00pm

Tickets: \$25 (advance purchase)

#### **Sunday, October 5 –**

Small Talk - "Chautauqua Movement"

*Presented by Jim Craft*

2:00pm

Admission: \$5

#### **Sunday, November 9 -**

Small Talk - "John Wilkes Booth Escape Route"

*Presented by Bill Grandstaff*

2:00pm

Admission: \$5

#### **Sunday, December 7 -**

Victorian Christmas Open House

1:00pm – 5:00pm

Admission: \$5 individual/\$10 family

### ***OCPHS Officers and Board of Directors***

#### ***President***

Fred Liimatta

#### ***1<sup>st</sup> Vice President***

Rodger Zeller

#### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President***

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Kathy Davis

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Anne Liimatta

Charlie Martinez

Linda Porter

Kari Vaughan



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### **MEET YOUR EDITOR**

Hello fellow supporters of this great organization!  
My name is Kari Vaughan and I am pleased to serve OCPHS as its new Gazette editor. A few facts about myself by way of introduction...I reside in Clarkston with my husband of five years, Robert, an automation engineer. I hold a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University in history and museum studies and a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University in state/local history. In addition to my involvement with OCPHS as a board member, event planner and grant writer, I play flute with the Farmington Community Band and try to keep my vegetable garden alive and the house uncluttered! It is only with your help that this newsletter can be truly beneficial to our membership, so if you have a comment, suggestion, etc please do not hesitate to email me at  
*kari.robert.vaughan@gmail.com*  
I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how the *Gazette* can be a tool for OCPHS' continued success!

### **CHRISTMAS IS COMING...**

**...and that means it's time to get the ball rolling on our annual Victorian Christmas Open House! Planning meetings will begin at the end of October and we would love for you to join us with your ideas. This year we will honor our veterans on Pearl Harbor Day; do you have information on the WWI, Korean or Vietnam conflicts that we can use in our programming? If so, please give Planning Committee Chair Kathy Davis a call at 248-334-5412. OCPHS will also participate in Pontiac's Holiday Extravaganza Parade on Saturday, December 6. Want to walk with us? Contact Anne Liimatta at 248-332-1247.**



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County Pioneer and Historical Society

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Twitter

*Oakland Gazette* is a publication of the  
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Submissions, content suggestions or comments are  
welcome.

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Editor: Kari Vaughan

Contributors: Bill Clink, Fred Liimatta, Ray Lucas, Kari Vaughan,  
Rodger Zeller

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