



Vol. 52, No. 1

Dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County, Michigan  
THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 2019

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### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Charlotte Cooper*



Happy Spring, everyone!

This season we commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which prohibits the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States based on sex.

The United States Constitution, adopted in 1789, left the boundaries of suffrage undefined. Congress finally passed the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1919, and on June 10<sup>th</sup> it was ratified by Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.

The amendment was ultimately ratified by the necessary number of states on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1920 as the culmination of the women's suffrage movement in the United States, which fought at both state and national levels to achieve the vote. Ladies, let's celebrate!

While we're on the subject of voting...the Annual Meeting and Election of our Society will take place this year on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am. We will take care of a little business, including voting in new and returning Board members, and then enjoy a light breakfast and each other's company. This meeting is open to all members, and we encourage you to come let your voice be heard as OCPHS moves forward into another year of preserving and conveying Oakland County history.

Warm regards, *Charlotte*

### CALLING ALL CANDIDATES!

*Bill Grandstaff, Nominating Committee*



We are approaching that time of year when we make a request to our membership for suggestions of potential new Board members. The terrific response we got last year resulted in many new candidates who have enhanced the actions of our current Board. We voted in more new directors than usual and at present we have a full Board. **HOWEVER**, there are folks out there who can bring new, special expertise to the table as we move forward! If you know someone (yourself or another talented individual) that can help OCPHS achieve our goals within the community, we encourage you or them to contact Joy in our office and request a nomination packet which explains the duties and responsibilities of a Board member. Completed applications should be returned to the office by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

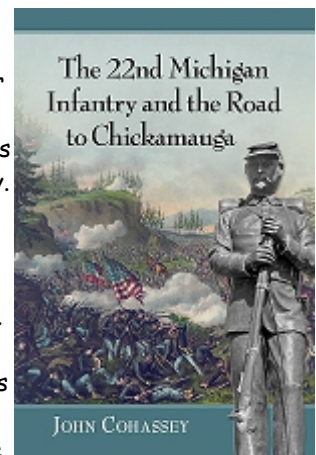
*Barbara Frye, Board member*

At one of our Wednesday evening "Pine Grove Notes" presentations, we met author John Cohassey as he shared information about the soldiers of the Michigan 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry.

John's new book, *The 22<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Infantry and the Road to Chickamauga*, was available for sale and signing.

This history explores the 22<sup>nd</sup>'s day-to-day experiences in Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia. John described the

challenges faced by volunteer farm boys, shopkeepers, schoolteachers and lawyers as they witnessed death, disease and starvation on battlefields and in Confederate prisons. We always enjoy listening to John when he visits! Copies of John's book are available to purchase in the Carriage House.



## WORLD WAR ONE DISPLAY HONORED

*John Scholl*

Last year OCPHS was paid a visit by Dennis Skupinski, who is Chair of the Michigan World War One Centennial Commission. He took photos of the WWI display in the Schoolhouse and toured Pine Grove's buildings. He was very impressed!

Recently we received through the mail a package from the Centennial Commission. Inside was a Certificate of Excellence and a Challenge Coin. The certificate reads as follows: "Michigan's World War One Centennial Commission would like to recognize The Oakland County Pioneer Museum and Historical Society with the Award of Excellence on December 11, 2018. Your display at the Drayton Plains School House Museum and the research that is being done in the Historical Society Library regarding the World War One Centennial is incredible. You are introducing more people to history and especially the history of the First World War. We would like to thank you and hope that you continue to take on an active role in the Michigan World War One Centennial. Signed, Dennis Skupinski." The certificate has been placed in the Schoolhouse display case at the back of the room. Stayed tuned for more information about the Challenge Coin in the next issue!



*Exhibit designers John Scholl and Sue Grifor with the certificate. Photo courtesy of John Scholl.*

## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY & OCPHS

*Barbara Frye*



OCPHS would like to welcome new member Graham Cassano, Ph.D., to our Society. Graham is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Oakland University. Currently he is working on a paper with Jon Carroll (Archaeology) and Dan Clark (History) on

the Spatial History of the Lakeside Housing Project. Graham has found some very revealing documents in our collection that will be featured in this paper. He received a grant from Oakland University to cover the cost of reproducing some of the photographs and maps for the paper, which will be given later this year and will be the basis for a subsequent book around 2022. Dr. Cassano and his team are working towards a *Spatial History of the City of Pontiac*, essentially a modern history of Pontiac from about 1950. Coleman Yoakum of Micah 6 Community has been assisting Graham in this endeavor. OCPHS and the research team are looking forward to working with Dr. Cassano and his team in the future.

Welcome on board, Dr. Cassano!

*(Photo courtesy of Oakland University)*



On a cold and snowy night in February, 30 intrepid historians gathered together at the Carriage House to be appreciated for all their wonderful good deeds in the name of history. Once again we enjoyed our annual "Appreciation Night" which recognizes our members and volunteers' devotion and service to OCPHS. Barbara Frye devoted much time and effort to fabricating Valentine name hearts and decorating our venue in a Valentine theme. Sara Cote and Kari Vaughan helped pull together a lovely spread of munchies, and Joy tirelessly filled in all the gaps and did whatever necessary to create the warm, friendly feeling Pine Grove is famous for. If you couldn't make it out, you were truly missed! Let me take this opportunity to thank you again for your dedicated support. If not for your love of Oakland County history, we would not be able to do all the wonderful things we do! - *Bill Clink, event co-chair*

## **CARRIAGE TEAM ACTIVITIES ROLLING ALONG**

*Mike West, Carriage Team chair*



In the 1800's, most centers of population had a blacksmith or craftsman engaged in hand-building horse-drawn carriages and wagons. They provided a vital method of transportation for farmers and merchants. In Pontiac, Lawrence and Pike streets were bustling with blacksmiths, livery stables, harness goods and carriage manufacturers.

But Pontiac had a couple of other things going for it. Railroads were connecting it to the rest of the continental USA. Civic leaders attracted talented men to the city who built modern factories that utilized automated equipment spawned by the Industrial Revolution. These factories were soon producing high quality, low cost carriages at production rates. Pontiac was shipping rail cars of carriages to points across the country and was ranked among the top carriage-producing centers in the USA.

Things changed quickly when the Welch Motor Car, Oakland Motor Car and Rapid Truck companies appeared in Pontiac. The carriage factories began producing motor vehicles, components and huge quantities of Model T bodies for Henry Ford's new assembly line factory in Highland Park.

Little of the fascinating carriage manufacturing industry remains in Pontiac today. However, OCPHS is very fortunate to have a 1901 Standard Vehicle Carriage that serves as an excellent reminder of that era. This vehicle, donated by the Randy Hammons family of Wisconsin, was accepted with the intention of using it as a teaching tool by OCPHS. The Carriage Team is working to achieve that objective.

During the very first meeting of the Carriage Team, the goal was established to "preserve" the Carriage, rather than "restore" it. The condition of the body and wheels are very good and enables us to pursue "preservation." However, items like the top, dash and fenders are beyond repair and need replacing. Where do we begin? What preservation tasks can we do ourselves? Who can do the work that needs to be farmed out? We started by

inviting The Henry Ford Museum Preservationist to assess the Carriage and help us develop a plan.

Following the recommendations from The Henry Ford, the Carriage Team began cleaning up 118 years of dust and grime to get a handle on just what we had. We invited their recommended contractor who came to see the Carriage and gave us a quote to replace the deteriorated components. We looked at examples of restored carriages and contacted the companies that did the work and are evaluating their quotes and material samples. We will narrow the field from these several contractors and visit their facilities to choose the one that will do the work on the Carriage. But...the extent of preservation work that we are able to undertake is financially dependent. The museum-quality contractor is in the \$20-30,000 range. A qualified Amish contractor charges from \$6-7,000. Our Carriage Fund has grown to \$4,600 (thanks to your donations!) and the Carriage Team has just applied for a grant to augment that. Our next meeting should solidify the scope of preservation work to be done and our cost goal. So, stay tuned; that knock on your door may not be the Avon lady, it may be your new best friend from the Carriage Team.

What is the big picture for the Standard Vehicle Carriage? It would be ideal to have it on the Pine Grove campus, but many things would need to happen for that to take place. Meanwhile, the place where we have been storing the Carriage is no longer available. We have been working with our good neighbors at the beautifully restored Wisner School and they have offered to display the Carriage in their new lobby. This is an excellent opportunity. The Wisner School is climate-controlled, is adjacent to Pine Grove, and will be readily available to us. Our obligation is to get the Carriage "show-ready." This offer also has a time limit, so we must move quickly. Looking into the future, there may be additional opportunities to display the Carriage. We will present these as they develop.

Many thanks to some key members of the Carriage Team who have volunteered much of their time and energy: Nancy and Don Calendine, Linda Porter, Kathy Davis and Adrian Rawls, Sherie Morgan, Sue Grifor, Laurie Bishop, and Bob and Leigh Sowles.

Anyone interested in joining the Carriage Team, please contact Mike West at 248-249-3583 or [mww1855@yahoo.com](mailto:mww1855@yahoo.com). Donations may be made to the OCPHS Carriage Fund by sending to: OCPHS, 405 Cesar E. Chavez, Pontiac, MI, 48342.

Above: The Standard Vehicle Carriage at its former home in Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Mike West.

## VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE 2018

*Kathy Davis, event chair*

This past December's VOH was very successful due to our wonderful volunteers, docents and sponsors!

There were about 150 adults, children and volunteers in attendance. Gross income was \$3,262.40, with expenses of \$300.

Joy Dockham compiled the information about the event and sent letters to secure sponsors and volunteers. She nicely decorated the Carriage House, where guests would enjoy cookies and hot chocolate. Sara Cote and her mom, along with Cindy Clink, welcomed visitors and served the refreshments. It was a big job, including all the cleanup.

Sherie Morgan and her friend Mary checked in attendees at the entrance gate during the cold and windy day. She also designed and typed the programs and thank you letters to sponsors and volunteers.

Bill Clink and crew managed the parking area. He and Fred Liimatta hung the green on the Wisner House. Linda Porter secured the donation of the greens, and collected the most sponsorships for the event.

Sue Grifor designed and decorated the Green Room. Sherie Morgan decorated the Formal Parlor. The Wisner House Committee cleaned and decorated the remainder of the mansion.

Charlotte Cooper did extensive research on the collection of 1800's and 1900's vintage wedding gowns, some with very long veils. There were mannequins set up displaying how an actual couple in their bride and groom outfits would have looked. Priscilla Shelton helped steam the gowns and veils. This display was one of many that brightened up the house and made a festive and warm Christmas event.

The Gift Shop was cleaned and decorated by Barbara and Judy Hudalla and Erik. Barb's smiles and friendliness encouraged new visitors to

become members. Guests entered the mansion arms loaded with purchases from the Gift Shop. Barb sold about \$500 of merchandise that day.

The Schoolhouse was decorated and overseen by Rosie Richardson. Bo Young greeted children as a jolly Santa and gave out gifts. Rosie volunteered her time over several weekends to allow the children a chance to decorate Christmas presents for the families. She received \$30 in donations.

The donated beautiful, full-size quilt brought in about \$250 in raffle sales.

Many thanks to our docents and entertainment: Rodger Zeller, Ray Lucas, John Scholl, Dwight Keith, Linda Porter, Nancy Duffield, Sue Grifor, Duane Getzmeyer, Larry Hathcock, Dale Kath, Ron Newman, Joan Hayes, Reida Gardiner, Rosie Richardson, Mike West, Dan DelMastro (pianist), and Mary Ann Fischer (Musica Royale).



**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR YOUR  
GENEROUS HOLIDAY SPIRIT!**

***Joyce Scafe (in memory of Gale &  
Connie Scafe)***

***Gaylor Forman***

***Bruce and Amy Annett***

***Gretchen Adler***

***David and Barb Hendershot***

***Lunghamer Chevy***

***Lunghamer Buick GMC***

***Leslie Electric***

***Joan Hayes (in memory of Guy Duffield)***

***Skip Upcott (Vintage Press)***

***Van Jones***

***Catherine Jo Dixon (in memory of  
Sylvester N. Morse)***

*Reida Gardiner  
Colleen Barkham*

*Dan Dewey (in memory of Edgar and  
Mary Jane Dewey)*

*Lisa Bica-Grodsky (in memory of Kitty Daggy)  
Linda Porter*

*Bo and Maureen Young*

*Fred and Anne Liimatta (Take Away Trash)  
Genisys Credit Union*

*The Henk Studio*

*Peel's Garden Center*

*Susan Williams (in memory of Miridan Foxman)*

## **1817 TOWNSHIP SURVEY MAPS**

***Barbara Frye***

What is a Survey Map? It is a tool to sell property in an uncharted wilderness before GPS was a twinkle in someone's eye. A grid system worked out by crews arduously dragging a Günter chain through the underbrush and thickets, ponds and swamps, woods and prairies, up hill and down dale, to open the interior of Oakland County to settlement. If you think that sentence was hard to manage, it was nothing compared to actually doing the fieldwork that was required to draw the original maps! In addition, each surveyor wrote copious notes describing the topography, flora and fauna, and conditions that the crew encountered while surveying the county. The notes are sometimes not that easy to read, although copies are available if you wish to read them.

### **WISNER HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT 2018**

***Kathy Davis, committee chair***

Ron Campbell, Preservation Architect for Oakland County, is working with the Committee; he has investigated the foundation and all areas of the House and found it stable. The House has been painted in several areas: The side porch floor, steps, railing, windowsills on side porch, all first floor windows, exterior doors, one inside door, bay windows, and ten green shutters on the front. This will keep them for a few more years.

The Gift Shop had several areas painted: All windows, storm doors and exterior steel doors (both sides). Door sills were repaired by Doors of Pontiac. This work helped to seal the back door and will prevent rainwater coming inside. The Summer Kitchen windows, doors and main door sill received repairs and were painted.

The outside of the Schoolhouse was painted and both sides of the three green doors were done. Doors of Pontiac repaired and installed gold kick plates on the outside bottom of each door. This work saved the steel doors and closed the gaps at the bottoms.

The House Committee did so much good work in 2018 and each member deserves recognition: Mike West, Sue Grifor, Adrian Rawls, Angela Rawls, Linda Porter and Sherie Morgan.

Robert Muller, president of the Royal Oak Historical Society and a member of the 1818 Expedition Study Committee that Dave Decker and I worked with, decided to re-work some of these township maps. He re-drew the township lines, then combined the survey notes with marks along the survey lines to produce excellent research maps of the territory in 1817. These maps are entirely hand drawn and lettered by Bob. Many hours went into the finished product, which Bob is generously sharing through the Royal Oak Historical Society's website. Bob has also promised copies to OCPHS to include with our research map collection. Thank you Bob!!!



### **TEA IN THE MANSION**



Indulge with savories, sweets and teas at a Spring Tea in the Historic Wisner Mansion!

Your hostesses for the afternoon will be Angelina, Jessie and Florence - three generations of Wisner women. Stroll through their 1850 home with Ann Johnson, great-grandniece of the Governor.

Spring bonnets are encouraged.

***Saturday, May 4, 2019 from 2 - 4 pm  
\$27.00 per person***

***Seating is limited; purchase tickets by  
April 27 via PayPal at [ocphs.org](http://ocphs.org)***

(We are sorry, but special menus and refunds are unavailable. The Wisner Mansion is not handicapped accessible).

**HISTORY COALITION OF OAKLAND COUNTY**  
**FOUNDED (OCPHS IMPLICATED IN**  
**ITS FOUNDING)**

*Dave Decker, Coalition member*

Last year, Oakland County's Bicentennial Committee, at that time "recently" founded ("recently" being a relative term), held a workshop and invited representatives from the local historical community to attend. At that singularly momentous event (at which many ideas for celebrating our county's 200-year history were bandied about), mention was made of the Macomb County History Alliance, a group of local historians and historical societies in that most worthy county. It seems that their alliance of interested citizens had quite successfully celebrated their county's 200<sup>th</sup> year, and a great speech of much import was given at this workshop telling the tale of their success.

Our own unruly group of historians, having nothing better to do, looked around the room and noted that other audience members appeared to be greatly interested in this speech and, at its conclusion, decided to do something unprecedented in our local historical community and blatantly steal their idea (*Author's note: This is not at all unprecedented in the local historical community.*)

And so it was: In January 2019, OCPHS used a badly outdated contact list to invite a number of historical societies, government agencies, schools, museums and interested parties to come together to see What Could Be Done About This, and formed the Oakland County History Alliance...only to be quite viciously attacked by the Historical Society of Michigan about the name of our group, since they themselves hold "History Alliance" events around the state and, more importantly, had trademarked it (*Author's note: It was actually a very polite request from the HSM president, asking us to please not use "Alliance" in our group's name).*

And so in February of this year and after some weeks of dithering about, during which virtually nothing was done about this idea (*also not unprecedented*), a group of some of our most erstwhile historical societies, government agencies, schools, museums and interested parties gathered at the Waterford Township Library and founded the Oakland County History Coalition...only to again be viciously attacked, this time by the Oakland County Historical Commission, over the use of OCHC as an acronym, claiming it was already in wide use and would cause great confusion among the county's citizenry (*One more note from the author: Again, a polite request was made. Also, get on with it.*)

And so, at our March meeting, we became the History Coalition of Oakland County and abolished the use of any abbreviation in our name because, frankly, we were tired.

*What is the History Coalition of Oakland County?*

Exactly as stated above – a wide-ranging group of local historical organizations, schools, government

agencies, museums and interested parties, gathering together at local venues and mostly chatting amongst ourselves.

*What is the purpose of the History Coalition?*

At our February meeting, we actually did do something unprecedented...we created and adopted a mission statement: "The History Coalition of Oakland County supports and promotes the history of Oakland County by encouraging collaboration among member organizations and the larger community." In other words, our goal is to encourage, support and promote each other's local history initiatives. The Coalition wants each and every local group to succeed, and we want to be there to share in that success.

*Nice. What's the real deal?*

**History Roundtables!** We want to share ideas, lend support, have delicious snacks and see each other's cool places. Each month, the Coalition meets at a different venue around the county. We share our experiences and learn about each other's interests and events.

**The County Bicentennial, aka Oak200!** Many of us have had or are planning bicentennial celebrations. At the county level, the bicentennial is a BIG DEAL. A coalition gives us a strong voice with the powers-that-be to ensure Oakland County's history is told by the very people that study its past.

**Let's write a book!** Our county history books are badly out of date (the last one was in 1912; the 1970 book doesn't count). The Oak200 committee already has this on their radar and wants historical groups to participate in writing it. How can we help, and how can we ensure our histories are told well?

*What about the meetings?*

Our first meeting was held February 5 at the Waterford Township Library, with Joan Rogers as our host. Our second meeting was held March 20 at the Oxford Township Library, with the Northeast Oakland Historical Society as our hosts. We toured the Northeast Oakland Historical Museum afterward. *Our next meeting is April 10 at the Gibson House in Wixom, hosted by the Wixom Historical Society. A tour of the Wixom-Wire House will begin at 6:00 pm, with the meeting following at 7:00 pm at the Gibson House (49805 Pontiac Trail, Wixom, MI 48393). Please join us!*



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**Sunday, April 14 -**

“USS Michigan: Great Lakes Guardian”  
(Mini Lecture Series)  
*Presented by Larry Hathcock*  
**2:00 pm / \$7 per person**

**Saturday, May 4 -**

“Tea in the Mansion”  
**2 – 4 pm / \$27 per person**

**Saturday, May 18 -**

OCPHS Annual Meeting & Election  
**9:30 am (doors open 9:00)**

**Sunday, May 19 -**

“Miscellaneous Facts and Stories about the  
Palmer-Ward House”  
(Mini Lecture Series)  
*Presented by Mark Thomas*  
**2:00 pm / \$7 per person**

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- \_\_\_ \$35 Family (two adults & minor children)
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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!

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applicable law*

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**PARTING THOUGHTS FROM THE GOVERNOR**

*Ann Johnson, Wisner descendant*

The following, concerning women and education, is taken from Moses Wisner's speech upon his leaving office...*"There is one subject, however, connected with our system of public instruction that I cannot pass by in silence. It is the great inequality of the workings of this system as applied to the females of our State. We allow them to attend primary schools and our normal school; this, practically, is the extent. We think it necessary to bestow upon our brothers and our sons a high order of instruction, while our sisters and our daughters must be content with such a one as can be obtained from a primary school. This is all wrong. Our educational fund is the common property of both sexes, and both shall share alike in its enjoyment. The State has a deep interest in the intellectual improvement of her daughters. They are, intellectually, our equals. There was a time when the world looked upon them as 'man's inferior,' but that day has long passed."* Governor Wisner then goes on to recommend the *"establishment of a separate Female Department of learning at Ann Arbor."* (The University of Michigan; this did not happen until two years later).

- Excerpted from the book *Messages of the Governors of Michigan, Volume 2.*

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

Volume 52 Number 1 March 2019

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Dave Decker, Barbara Frye, Bill Grandstaff, Ann Johnson,  
John Scholl, Kari Vaughan, Mike West

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