



Vol. 53, No. 2

Dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County, Michigan

June 2020

THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Pontiac, Michigan 48342

Ph: 248-338-6732

Email: office@ocphs.org

Web: www.oaklandhistorycenter.org

## ASYLUM PATIENTS MEMORIAL ERECTED AT PONTIAC'S OAK HILL CEMETERY



Big news in the preservation and celebration of Oakland County history! The monument to asylum patients at the historic Oak Hill Cemetery in Pontiac has been successfully installed!

OCPHS joined the efforts of community activists to raise funds, conduct research and spread the word about this project. Many folks supported the cause with their attendance at the annual Oak Hill Cemetery Walk and with donations collected at our Pontiac Asylum talk last fall. Massive kudos are in order to OCPHS Board member Nancy Calendine for her coordination of this project, and to Larry Keehn for his years of advocating for Oak Hill's preservation.

On one side of the black granite memorial appears the names of those patients buried by the state over the decades, 283 in all. The other side reads:

"Here interred are patients who died during care at the former Eastern Michigan Asylum, later called Pontiac State Hospital and Clinton Valley Center, which operated in Pontiac from 1878 to 1997. Deceased patients not claimed by relatives or friends were interred in numbered burial plots with patients' names by the hospital,

with the expectation that some might eventually be claimed and moved to family sites elsewhere. Recognizing our shared humanity, those who remain are memorialized by this marker, dedicated in the year 2020, and placed by volunteers of the Oak Hill Cemetery Preservation Society, Better Pontiac Community Development Corporation and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society with special recognition of Larry Keehn, Nancy Calendine, Sean Kammer, Mike McGuinness and Bruce Annett."

This is the latest in a series of preservation projects at the landmark cemetery. Crumbling mausoleums have been rebuilt and restored to their original splendor. There are many more repairs needed in other areas, however. Please contact us if you would like to make a donation toward Oak Hill Cemetery's restoration.



Some of the listed 283 deceased's names: Caroline Roeschlein, 1880. Nancy Beach, 1881. The Stone Twins, a boy and a girl, 1895. Harry Fields, 1915. Morris Stein, 1931. Baby Clarence Schmidt, 1931. Edward J. Maloy, 1962. Visit the memorial or contact our office to view more. Images courtesy of Mike McGuinness.

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

***Charlotte Cooper***



Change is constant, and our Society has seen several changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for staying home and staying safe. The Pine Grove campus has reopened, and we continue to practice social distancing. Activities undertaken by your Board of Directors over the past three months are as follows:

**MEETINGS:** The March and April Board meetings were conducted via teleconference, and the Annual Meeting of the Members in May was held in the grassy parking area with attendees sitting in their vehicles and wearing masks. Your president ran the meeting standing on a picnic table. The June Board meeting was held under the sycamore tree in front of the Carriage House, with those unable to attend in person using teleconference.

**MEMBERS:** Dave Decker and Joy Dockham are new Board members serving a three-year term. Anne and Fred Liimatta and Rodger Zeller are new Directors Emeritus, making a total of 25. Society officers are President Charlotte Cooper, First VP Sara Cote, Second VP Bill Grandstaff, Secretary Barb Frye and Treasurer Joy Dockham.

**BUSINESS:** In March, the Board adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Policy. In April, Dave Decker was appointed chairperson of Collections Management, which includes all artifacts, library archives, textiles, decorative items and furniture. In June, the Board elected the above officers, de-accessed a quilt and affirmed the public re-branding direction for our historic campus to be the Oakland History Center.

**Kudo/Kudos** is a Greek word meaning “praise, honor, acclaim.” Kudos are usually offered in response to exceptional achievement. Using this definition, I give kudos to three particular people for their persistence in their areas of interest: To Ray Lucas for his archaeological dig; to Dave Decker for his management of our PastPerfect museum software; and to Pam Schmaltz for her transcription and organization of files and letters. Exceptional praise goes to our Executive Director Mike McGuinness, who has now been with us for one full year!

I am honored to again serve as our Society's president, and I will fulfill this position to the best of my ability.

Warm regards! *Charlotte*

**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

***Mike McGuinness***



The Oakland County 2020 bicentennial year adventures continue! Our biggest, latest news is our name refresh: Our campus is now the Oakland History Center. This better positions us to market to and attract a broader audience for generations to come. The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society is the parent organization and that venerable name will remain.

Despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic, we've continued to grow and progress. While closed to the public, I got busy applying for as many grant funding opportunities as possible. We are grateful to have been awarded grants from Michigan Humanities Council, National Endowment for the Humanities, U.S. Small Business Administration, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Oakland University, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, National Endowment for the Arts and Oakland County. More requests are pending; if you know of other funding opportunities that exist, please let me know.

I want to also celebrate the generosity of Joyce Scafe, Gretchen and Ed Adler, Amy and Bruce Annett, Dr. Kay and Jay Taylor, Ed Lee, Steve Cartier and Charlotte Cooper; their donations helped us bridge the interruption in tours and events. Thank you to the Vaughan family for generously sponsoring the printing of this edition of our Gazette!

Our grounds have been enhanced, including through the adoption of multiple flower beds by members. Thank you to those supportive individuals, including the Lydia Barnes Potter Chapter of the DAR which you will read about elsewhere in this issue. Please explore our campus anytime; more upgrades are imminent. Our facilities are once more open to visitors, but we're taking a “by appointment only” approach for now.

The asylum memorial is in place, many research requests were completed, our social media presence reaches thousands and the local history features we email are very popular. We successfully held the Annual Meeting, Moses Wisner birthday celebration and Flag Day ceremony amid social distancing mandates. Just around the corner is the Summer Ice Cream Social: Bicentennial Edition! Please support as you're able. Together, we'll advance our mission of saving and celebrating Oakland County's history – adapting to the new challenges and opportunities that unfold daily.

With gratitude and optimism, *Mike*



**Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society**  
**146<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Membership**  
**Saturday, May 16, 2020**

The 146<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society was held on Saturday, May 16, 2020 in the Pine Grove Parking Area, 405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan. The president and secretary were present. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 11:07 A.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by United States Military Veterans Dave Decker, John Scholl, Skip Upcott and Dave Walls.

Connor Newton moved to 'dispense with the business portion of the meeting, except for the election and announcement of the Board members, and that we move directly to the program.' **MOTION ADOPTED.**

Directors re-elected for another three year term were Kathy Davis, Ann Johnson, Linda Porter and Bill Grandstaff. Newly elected directors for a three year term were Joy Dockham and Dave Decker.

Persons receiving Director Emeritus status and certificates were Anne Liimatta and Fred Liimatta for serving ten years on the Board of Directors, and Rodger Zeller for serving nineteen years on the Board of Directors.

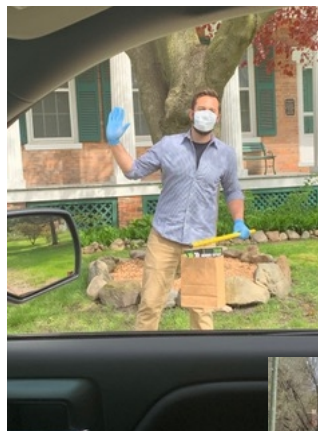
Executive Director Mike McGuinness announced the 'Campus Drive-through' events would be the 205<sup>th</sup> birthday of Moses Wisner on June 3 and Flag Day on June 14. The Summer Social will happen in some form, even if it is also a 'drive-through.'

The 2019 Annual Report was distributed as vehicles entered the property. Social distancing was practiced due to COVID-19.

Barbara Frye moved to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION ADOPTED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 A.M.

Charlotte Cooper, President  
Acting for Secretary Kathy Davis  
May 20, 2020



*Executive Director Mike McGuinness greets attendees from a safe distance as they arrive at Pine Grove.*

*OCPHS members participate in the meeting and enjoy the lovely spring day from their vehicles.*



*Mike keeps everyone focused.*



*President Charlotte Cooper presents Rodger Zeller (bottom left) and the Liimattas (right) with their Emeritus Director certificates.*

*Images courtesy of Barbara Frye.*

## THE OCPHS MAP COLLECTION

*Dave Decker*

Our research library has been closed for a while, making it, well, difficult to do research, and we're making a strong effort to bring as much of our research library onto our website as we can. We hope that you find our online resources useful, and will consider making a donation to our research library to offset the hosting and preparation costs involved. We are grateful for any support you can provide. You can donate here: <https://www.ocphs.org/donate/>

A major component of researching our county's history - or the history of a family, place or event - are our maps. When doing research or other high-falutin' activities, OCPHS staff is naturally drawn to our old maps. They're usually one of the first places we look to learn more about nearly anything. Maps put things into context. They tell us where people were, which sometimes isn't where people are these days. They are a peek into the past. We love maps. You can access our maps here, at this address:

[www.ocphs.org/maps-and-map-resources/](http://www.ocphs.org/maps-and-map-resources/)



### **"The Wampler Maps" - 1817**

These were ordered by Edward Tiffin and Lewis Cass. They are the result of a large effort by the U.S. Congress to sell land. These surveys imposed the Land Survey Act of 1785 onto the landscape. The Act created the subdivisions we know today - counties, townships, sections and quarter sections - that allowed people to visualize and then purchase lands to settle. They form the foundation of the maps that followed.

These maps are available right here:

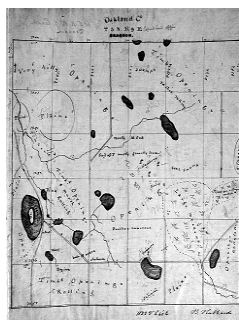
<https://www.ocphs.org/1817-early-survey-of-oakland-county/>

To learn more about this complex, multi-pronged effort to lay out and offer these lands for sale, I recommend reading Paul Sewick's blog at [detroiturbanism.blogspot.com](http://detroiturbanism.blogspot.com), and specifically, these two articles (offered with Paul's permission):

<http://detroiturbanism.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-grid-part-i-survey-of-michigan.html>

<http://detroiturbanism.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-grid-part-ii-survey-of-metro-detroit.html>

Paul lays out the history of how Michigan's territory was surveyed, laid out and offered for sale to prospective landowners in a very easy to read format.



### **"The Hubbard Maps" of Oakland County**

Between 1838 and probably 1842, a surveyor and geologist named Bela Hubbard created a set of survey maps for the county. We can't date them exactly, but they show us early towns, roads and prominent places in the county. They show us lime deposits, foliage, terrain conditions and the like.

The railroad between Pontiac and Detroit is displayed. Important stops along the roads and trails are indicated - taverns and hotels, for example. Their focus, as with the Wampler maps, is on land conditions to support land sales. These maps are available at the Burton Collection and of course, here:

<https://www.ocphs.org/1838-1840-map-of-oakland-county-bela-hubbard-surveyor/>



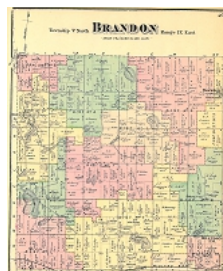
### **"The Hess Map" of Oakland County**

And then we come to the 1857 Oakland County map, AKA the "Hess" map. Only about six, maybe seven, copies are known to exist at various locations around the county. The image shown in this article is a color copy of the map. The maps around the county are black and white, and about 8 feet square. You can find this map here:

<https://www.ocphs.org/1857-oakland-county-map/>

### **Plat Map Books - 1872, 1896, and 1908**

In the latter part of the 19th century, county atlas books were published by different companies, with townships, villages and cities detailed within them. They are invaluable resources.

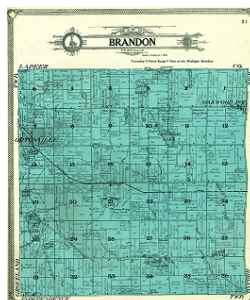
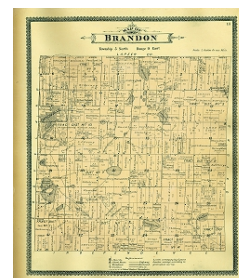


### **1872 Atlas of Oakland County - GW Beers, Publisher**

<https://www.ocphs.org/1872-oakland-county-maps-fw-beers-publisher/>

### **1896 Illustrated Atlas of Oakland County - Kace Publishing Co.**

<https://www.ocphs.org/illustrated-atlas-of-oakland-county-1896-kace-publishing-co/>



### **1908 Standard Atlas of Oakland County**

<https://www.ocphs.org/1908-standard-atlas-of-oakland-county-geo-a-ogle-co-chicago/>



### So: What Can You Do With These Maps?

Well, number one, do what everyone does and find your house! By following roads, you can find the location of your house, or get somewhat close. If you're lucky and your house was standing when the map was made, it may well show up as a black square (this is only true of the atlases - the large 1857 map doesn't show residence locations). If necessary, take a modern map and trace modern roads onto onionskin, or even plain copy paper, and overlay it over the plat map. Or if you're the digital type, use Google Maps and overlay it onto the plat map. Either way, it's fun to see how an area has changed over time. For genealogy buffs, they are a great resource to learn where within a township an ancestral family lived. For city, town or village researchers, the atlases have town plats, showing where important businesses were located. Again, a great way to see how an area has changed through history.

### What's Next For Our Map Collection?

Not only have we undertaken the task of bringing the maps online as a useful resource, we're also laminating copies of the maps. Our atlas books are fragile. We do have "extra" maps - unbound maps and maps in poor condition - that we're laminating for daily use. We're undertaking a project in the near future to index some of the maps. And we're digitizing and conserving rare maps to protect them for use by the people that follow us in maintaining the OCPHS collection. We have plans to bring several of the 20th century plat maps online. These were created and sold by 4-H clubs as fundraisers from the 1930s and into the 1960s. We also want to bring the Sanborn Maps - made by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company - online. These cover a number of communities starting from about 1880 and through to the 1930s. Made for fire department use, they show us buildings.

### Wrapping Up: Please Enjoy Our Maps!

We hope you find these maps interesting and useful. As always please feel free to reach out to our research library staff, or visit us in person, to see them for yourselves and to learn more about Oakland history.

### A PROFILE OF ELIZABETH SPARKS ADAMS

*Charlotte Cooper*



**Elizabeth (Betty) Adams was a 50-year member of OCPHS and its first female president. Her father-in-law, Jayno Adams, was responsible for purchasing Pine Grove from Florence Wisner Clark Wallace.**

**Betty secured information from Florence regarding family and property history. OCPHS has correspondence between Betty and New York decorating businesses regarding appropriate wallpapers, drapes and other items for the mansion. She was very well-connected and helped put the mansion's restoration on the right track.**

**Betty was an American historian whose contributions to the state of Michigan are unparalleled. She received degrees from Pontiac High School, Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan. She was the first curator of the Michigan Historical Collections and received a lifetime achievement award from the University of Michigan's Board of Regents. Betty served for 54 years on the Michigan Historical Commission, making her the longest-serving public official in Michigan history. She was the Commission's first female president, serving 14 years in that role, and helped establish Michigan's Centennial Farm and State Historic Marker programs.**

**Betty was the first female president of the Historical Society of Michigan, was on the Waterford Township Board of Education, and was admitted to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 2016. Her papers were donated to the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan and to OCPHS. She died at 95 years of age in 2007. Betty and her husband Don descended from Revolutionary War Patriots and were members of SAR and DAR.**

### LYDIA BARNES POTTER PLANTS A GARDEN

*Pam Schmaltz*

The schoolhouse garden at the Gov. Moses Wisner home in Pontiac was invaded Monday, June 1, by a group of intrepid women from the Lydia Barnes Potter (LBP) Chapter of the DAR, outfitted with hats, gloves and masks and carrying all the necessary gardening tools. They weeded, planted, moved the good and discarded the not-so-great. This was an effort to bring some organization to a garden that was overgrown and badly in need of some color. The center garden replaced huge overgrown hostas with much smaller versions that better fit the space. Color was added to the garden at the right of the porch with downsized versions of hostas, sedum, iris and daylilies, all donated by Claire Pryor and Pam Miller. OCPHS should have the beginnings of a garden that can be easily maintained and will look wonderful for years to come.

Those responsible for the transformation were Barbara Hofmann, LBP Regent and a new OCPHS member; Claire Pryor, our Master Gardener and LBP member; Barb Frye, a member of both OCPHS and LBP, as is Pam Schmaltz; Pam Miller is an LBP Associate Member.

OCPHS Executive Director Mike McGuinness will tuck a plaque in among the plants stating that the garden is a project of the LBP Chapter of the DAR.



*Image courtesy of Barbara Frye*

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

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

*Katie Annett – Kansas*

*Carol Ciaramitaro – Walled Lake*

*Eddie Cordell – Pontiac*

*Pamela Epple – Troy*

*Dick Euler – Bloomfield Hills*

*Suzanne Fenske – Rochester Hills*

*Duane & Cecilia Fueslein – Detroit*

*Thomas Hagen – Rochester*

*Dr. Barb Hofmann – Bloomfield Hills*

*Marlene Howell – Auburn Hills*

*Susan Kuhn – Troy*

*Steven Jonnes – Virginia*

*Myron Maley – Pontiac*

*Colleen Ochoa Peters – Bloomfield Hills*

*Helen Olson – Waterford*

*Anita Stevens – Davisburg*



**Remembering Motoko Huthwaite (1927 to 2020)**

Motoko Fujishiro Huthwaite, a Life Member of OCPHS, passed away at age 92 on May 4, 2020, of complications from coronavirus. For many years she resided in Pontiac's Seminole Hills neighborhood with her husband, W.E.C. "Ernie" Huthwaite, a prominent attorney who was also a member of OCPHS. He preceded her in death in 1997. Motoko's life was remarkable and she had a big impact on preserving art and history following World War II. She was part of the 'Monuments Men' and the last surviving 'Monuments Woman.' In 2015, she was in attendance as the group was presented with the Congressional Gold Medal for their important work. We reflect on Motoko's life, grateful for when she made history by saving history, and are honored that our Society got to benefit from her wisdom and support.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

***\*All upcoming events are TENTATIVE, considering uncertain public health restraints.***

### **July 25 (Day 1 of 2)**

Oakland County Bicentennial Summer Social  
Drive-Through Event  
Noon – 4 P.M.

### **July 26 (Day 2 of 2)**

Oakland County Bicentennial Summer Social  
Drive-Through Event  
Noon – 4 P.M.

### **August 7**

Summer Outdoor Concert Series

### **August 21**

Summer Outdoor Concert Series

### **September 20**

Oak Hill Cemetery Walk

### **October 17 and 18**

Haunted Museum Family Fun Days

### **October 25 and 26**

Downtown Pontiac Ghost Tours

### **November 14**

"Dishes Past" Historic Cuisine Popup Dinner

### **November 28**

Vintage Holiday Market & Hanging of the Greens

### **December 5 and 6**

Christmas Magic at the Museum

***Follow us on social media and watch your email for further information on these events!***

**“REELING IN” HISTORY**

*Ann Johnson*



**A wonderful donation has found its way to the Society! Recently, while surfing on Google, I found a fishing reel invented by our own Charles (Chip) Wisner. These reels are very scarce and hard to find. The gentleman who owned it told me that it is a very much coveted piece by collectors and is considered one of the top three reels ever invented. Wow!**

**The reel is made of German silver, which is not actually silver but a pewter-like product, very strong yet lightweight. Charles named it the Michigan Reel and received a patent for it in 1899. In a magazine ad the price was listed as \$20.00; with drag, \$21.00. He also invented and patented a minnow trap, which is next on my list to find. These are also very scarce.**

**OCPHS has been very lucky to find not only this reel but the pistol that once belonged to Moses Wisner. With luck, we hope to find more to add to our collection! *Image courtesy of Charlotte Cooper.***

**OCPHS Officers and Board of Directors**

**President**

Charlotte Cooper

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

Sara Cote

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

Bill Grandstaff

**Secretary**

Barbara Frye

**Treasurer**

Joy Dockham

**Directors**

Nancy Calendine

Kathy Davis

Dave Decker

Ann Johnson

Ronnie Karpinski

Evan Monaghan

Linda Porter

Adrian Rawls

Rosie Lance-Richardson

Priscilla Shelton

Rita Ski

Skip Upcott

**Membership and Donation Form**

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Send my *Gazette* via:  U.S. Mail  Email  
**(Please add \$5 to cover cost of printing and postage if sending via U.S. Mail)**

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

- \$10 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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 868  
Royal Oak, MI

**OAKLAND COUNTY BICENTENNIAL**  
**SUMMER ICE CREAM SOCIAL!**

Two-Day Drive-Through Extravaganza  
Saturday, July 25 and Sunday, July 26  
12:00 - 4:00 P.M. Free Admission

Come one, come all! Celebrate Oakland County's 200<sup>th</sup> milestone with a socially distant drive-through cornucopia of local history, reenactment characters, farm animals, live music, ice cream and more. We've partnered with the Pontiac Transportation Museum for a classic car feature, too. Donations will be collected to repair an exterior wall's failing masonry on the Governor Wisner home. This is OCPHS' 51<sup>st</sup> annual Social, held at our Oakland History Center, 405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue in Pontiac.

Sponsorship opportunities remain! For \$1,000, we can keep the admission free again this year. For \$500, we can ensure we don't run out of free ice cream for all. For \$100, we can bring even more farm animals to wow the kids. For \$50, we can get more masks to keep our volunteers safe. All sponsors will be prominently featured at the event and throughout the year! Mail in a donation or contact the office for more info. #Oak200

Find us on Facebook.com/Oakland  
County Pioneer and Historical Society



Follow us on Twitter  
Twitter.com/OCPHS

Instagram  
@oaklandcountyhistory



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

Volume 53 Number 2 June 2020

Editor: Kari Vaughan

Contributors: Charlotte Cooper, Dave Decker, Barbara Frye, Ann Johnson, Mike McGuinness, Pam Schmaltz, Kari Vaughan

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Page 1: Asylum Patients Memorial Erected at Pontiac's Oak Hill Cemetery
- Page 2: President's Corner; From the Executive Director
- Page 3: 2020 Annual Meeting and Election
- Page 4: The OCPHS Map Collection
- Page 5: A Profile of Elizabeth Sparks Adams; Lydia Barnes Potter Plants a Garden
- Page 6: Welcome New Members; Remembering Motoko Huthwaite; Mark Your Calendar
- Page 7: "Reeling In" History; Membership & Donation Form
- Page 8: Bicentennial Summer Ice Cream Social Sponsorship Opportunities