



THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Pontiac, MI 48342

phone: (248) 338-6732

email: office@ocphs.org

website: www.oaklandhistorycenter.org

THE GARDENS AT PINE GROVE ~ FROM HIS OWN PEN

By Pam Schmaltz

In light of the landscape changes that Pine Grove will experience starting this summer, it might be that a timely ramble through the history of Moses Wisner's own plantings would prove of some interest. Moses sold his Lapeer farm and opted for something that he could manage while engaging in a law practice in Pontiac. In his letters to Angeline, he paints her a rosy picture of the property, telling her of uncountable tulips surrounding the mansion, trees heavy with fruit, wildly blooming hedges – and his green beans infested with a bug he can't identify and will, therefore, save for her to deal with. Bless him.

He writes her often about what plants and trees he has ordered (some from as far away as New York), where he is thinking of putting them, what's blooming and what has been lost to the weather. Moses planted a kitchen garden, replete with those pesky green beans, his radishes – 'not doing so well as they are too thick,' the potatoes his man Walker planted, his melons and his strawberries. He talks enthusiastically about his orchards, the plum trees, apples, pears and especially his peach trees, being in full bloom and beautiful. His horse chestnuts had 'grown a foot,' and his tulip tree had so many 'blossoms' they could not be counted. He 'set out' his trees in a May blizzard before sunrise, and yet was in his office 'before court met at 1/2 pass 8.' He may have had Walker, but Moses worked his own land.

In his attempt to lure Angeline from what he called 'the Flint' where she lived with her father, he asked her to come and stay with him for a couple of months 'if she were not very busy' and help him put up his peaches. I'm pretty sure she didn't have to think twice: August, heat wave, more than one tree full of fruit, a hot summer kitchen, sugar everywhere, no screens, lazy summer flies. I do believe she was busy.

Continued



What seems to have been most important to him, once his family's food needs had been provided for, are those flowers. When a man says about his blooms: 'Oh! the tulips, the tulips!' you have to figure this is someone who is waxing a bit too rhapsodic about something other men might never notice. He attempted to count them for Angeline, counting only those that had bloomed he got to 500 and gave up. Moses planted more than 500 tulip bulbs – can you imagine the expense in the 1840s?

He had a greenhouse built, he planted ivy; he planted dahlias everywhere and ordered more; he had a favorite geranium, and planted more of those,

OCPHS 149th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

All members of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society are hereby invited to the 149th Annual Meeting of the Members on Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting is held at the historic Wisner School, located at 441 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan 48342. Business will include the annual Board of Directors elections, Lifetime Achievement Award presentation, volunteer recognition, and presentation of the Annual Report. For more information, including to confirm your membership status is current, please contact our office at (248) 338-6732.



The Society was established in 1874

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Sara Cote, Highland
1st Vice President: Dave Decker, Clarkston
2nd Vice President: Connor Newton, Waterford
Secretary: Barbara Frye, Pontiac
Treasurer: Joy Dockham, Clarkston

Board Members:

Nancy Calendine, Pontiac
Charlotte Cooper, Clarkston
Kathy Davis, Pontiac
Iris Dominguez DeLaO, Pontiac
Bill Grandstaff, Romeo
Gloria Harris-Ford, Pontiac
Dyann Hayes, Auburn Hills
Ann Johnson, Pontiac
Gwen Markham, Novi
Evan Monaghan, Pontiac
Linda Porter, Pontiac
Adrian Rawls, Pontiac
Rosie Richardson, Pontiac
Rita Ski, Birmingham
Rodger Zeller, Waterford

Executive Director: Mike McGuinness

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

James Aldrich and
Lisa Milton, Bloomfield Hills
Donovan Deese, Burton
Devon MacDermaid and
Angela Zerbel, Westland
Angelo Molinari, Dearborn
Marilyn Morgan, New Hudson
Richard Ren, Chesterfield
Jane Snyder, Shelby Township
John Stamey, Rochester Hills
John Timmerman, Waterford

Corporate Member

Cryptic Services

Nonprofit Member

Friends of Royal Oak Township

Society Membership dues run from January to December of each year.
Please consider OCPHS for your end of year tax deductible donations. Thank you.

THE GARDENS AT PINE GROVE ~ FROM HIS OWN PEN *(continued)*

too. He loved fleurs de lis (we decided these must be irises) and said they were very 'handsome;' he had day lilies put in where something had died because that something found it too warm in its original spot. And so, he replanted to save them.

This is a small snapshot of a man who knew that careful husbandry of his land was important to his family's welfare, but we know he made sure it was beautiful as well. He never stopped writing to Angeline about his home and the improvements to the land, hoping she would soon make it hers. Moses left Pine Grove a beautiful, colorful legacy and I think this is a legacy we need to honor.



Pam Schmaltz



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members is when the Members elect Candidates to the OCPHS Board of Directors.

The Directors running for an additional three year term are:

Nancy Calendine ~ Pontiac
Charlotte Cooper ~ Clarkston
Kathy Davis ~ Pontiac
Dave Decker ~ Clarkston
Iris DeLaO ~ Pontiac
Joy Dockham ~ Pontiac

Bill Grandstaff ~ Romeo
Gloria Harris-Ford
Dyan Hayes ~ Auburn Hills
Ann Johnson ~ Pontiac
Gwen Markham ~ Novi
Linda Porter ~ Pontiac

Celebrate Your Pioneer Michigan Ancestors



The Michigan Pre-Statehood and First Families certificates are offered by Michigan Genealogical Council as a way to honor our ancestors who settled the Great Lakes State.

Recipients will receive either the Pre-Statehood or the First Families certificate, depending on the arrival date of their earliest Michigan (or Michigan territory) ancestor.

Pre-Statehood

before Jan. 26, 1837

First Families

Jan. 26, 1837 to Dec. 31, 1880

Personalized certificates and a pin bearing the emblem of the certificate will be presented to recipients, and their ancestor's name will be added to a database of early Michigan pioneers.

This is a great opportunity to preserve the history of your Michigan ancestors, with a goal of having well documented lineages of our Michigan pioneers. The Oakland History Center library would be a great place to begin your research.

OCPHS Member Barb Hofmann is one of the reviewers for this program. She would be delighted to help you find the records you need to fill out an application.

The Pioneer Certificate application and a promotional brochure are available to download on the Michigan Genealogical Council website:

<https://mimgc.org/pioneer-certificates/>



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings from the President!

Thank you all for being here! We have such a wonderful staff and the best members and volunteers an organization could ask for. I would like to extend a huge appreciation for all that you do! Like myself, I'm sure



you have had enough of this wintery March! I am so looking forward to spring and all the fun events we have planned for you this year. The project I am currently most excited about is the Native Garden Grant we received from the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. The grant has me walking the grounds with an entirely new set of eyes. I am very eager to increase the beauty and diversity of our already stunning campus. This project blends two of my most favorite things, history and nature. I am thankful to have a such great committee working on this project with me. Stay tuned to see the transformation begin!

What are you excited about this year? What kind of programing you would like to see? Let us know what we are doing well or areas you think we could improve. We look forward to hearing from you!

Happy Spring!

Sincerely and humbly,
Sara Cote



INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS INVITED

Summer Social Planning Meetings First Friday of Each Month

Do you love our annual Summer Ice Cream Social? Would you like to help us make it the most dynamic event that it possibly can be? Well, we would love to have you join in the planning fun. The first Friday of every month, starting at 3:00 pm, we'll meet at the Carriage House on our Oakland History Center campus. Food and refreshments will be provided to participants. Mark your calendars for April 7, May 5, June 2, and July 7.

This year's Summer Social will be held July 29th and 30th, 2023, from noon to 4:00 pm each day.

Contact the office and/or Executive Director Mike McGuinness for more information.



AROUND THE HISTORY CENTER...

GENEALOGIST ON BOARD

Starting May 9, 2023, OCPHS Member Barb Hofmann, an experienced Genealogist, will be available on Campus to assist visitors to the Oakland History Center discover the history of their families. Barb has been well versed in researching family histories for DAR, Colonial Dames, and Mayflower Families, all lineage societies that require direct line research and proofs.

Barb will be available, by appointment, during regular business hours, in our Research Library to assist you to find what we can in house, and on line. Please call the office to set up an appointment. 248 335-6732

VIEW OF WISNER HOUSE 1943

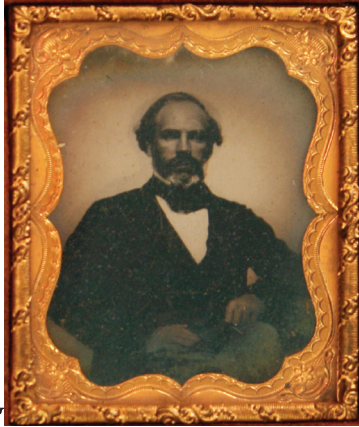
Historical Society members Bryan Paris and Michael Martin shared this photograph with me last weekend; Michael's father is an antique collector and came across a batch of *Pontiac Daily Press* photographs and this was one of them. The image back includes the notation that it was from 1943.

I had never seen this image before and thought it might be new to most or all of you, as well. So, I'm passing it along so you can take in what this angle of the house looked like before the Historical Society began our time caring for the site! I thought it was fascinating. MMcG

Photo Credits: 1943 image Pontiac Daily Press ~ 2023 image Barbara L. Frye



HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOSES!



MOSES WISNER, the twelfth governor of Michigan, was born in Springport, New York on June 3, 1815. His early education was attained in the common schools of his native state. In 1837, he moved to Michigan and settled in Lapeer County, where he worked as a farmer and studied law. He was admitted to the bar in 1841, and then established his legal career, serving as the Lapeer County prosecuting attorney. Wisner first entered politics in 1854, as an unsuccessful candidate for Congress. He next secured the Republican gubernatorial nomination, and went on to win election to the governorship on November 2, 1858. During his tenure, construction on state roads was advanced; four new counties were formed; the general registration law was sanctioned; a law department was created at the University of Michigan; and the St. Mary's Ship Canal was revitalized. After completing his term, Wisner left office on January 2, 1861, and retired from political life. In 1862 he organized the 22nd Michigan Infantry, of which he was commissioned colonel, however before seeing any action in the Civil War, Wisner contracted typhoid fever and died. Governor Moses Wisner was buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Pontiac, Michigan.

Source:

Sobel, Robert, and John Raimo, eds. *Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978*, Vol. 2, Westport, Conn.; Meckler Books, 1978. 4 vols.

1892 Portrait & Biographical Album of Genesee, Lapeer & Tuscola Counties.

<https://www.nga.org/governor/moses-wisner/>

This is essentially the same Biography for Moses Wisner you will find in any Historical tome published after the Civil War. It is a sketch of a very complicated man who loved the property this Society has charge of. We honor him and our beloved Pine Grove with this Birthday Garden Party. Happy Birthday Moses! ~ ed.

Ambrotype of Moses Wisner from the OCPHS Collection



Spring Cleaning Volunteer Days

Come join us
April 15th & 16th
and help to make our
Campus shine!
Come prepared to get
dirty, bring your work
gloves & garden tools!

OCPHS BOARD MEMBERS SHARING WITH COMMUNITY



April 29th
2023

The
Waterford Genealogical Society
And The
Waterford Township Public Library
5100 Civic Center Drive, Waterford Twp, MI 48329
Invite you to join us at our 17th

Genealogy
Lock-In

For details & fees please visit the Waterford Genealogical Society website at:
<https://waterfordmigenesoc.thatfamiliesdo.com>

Enjoy an Evening of
Classes, Research, Discussion



OCPHS Board Members Dave Decker and Barbara Frye are featured speakers at the WGS Genealogical Lock-In this year. An Annual Event, paused by the Pandemic, the Lock-in, sponsored by the Waterford Genealogical Society and the Waterford Township Public Library, offers after hours use of the Library facilities with scheduled talks given by area Genealogy experts.

All are welcome.

Pre-registration is recommended for best class selections. Please visit the WGS website for fees and registration form.
<https://waterfordmigenesoc.thatfamiliesdo.com>

GOVERNOR WISNER'S BIRTHDAY GARDEN PARTY

Save the Date!

Saturday June 3, 2023

We will be celebrating the 208th Anniversary
of the birth of Moses Wisner
5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Gardens



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Fellow local history advocates, I am heartened to share with you that our Historical Society has received a large, generous end of life gift from one of our longtime members. This generous gift exponentially grows our long-term resources. It is a big deal that puts our nonprofit on more solid footing as we forge ahead to ensure through the generations to come.

In my previous reports in past Gazettes, I wrote to you about the passing of longtime member Gaylor Forman and his special bond with the Historical Society over four decades. In a subsequent edition I wrote to you about his generosity to our organization, through the years. Well, brace yourselves for this news: Our Historical Society has to date received over \$500,000 from the estate of Mr. Forman to go to our endowment. And some final installments are still anticipated.

To put that in perspective, our endowment had about \$200,000 prior to his bequest. So the end of life gift from Mr. Forman has already more than tripled our endowment. These funds mean that, more than ever, our Historical Society is better equipped to survive and thrive for years to come.

These funds will not be covering our day-to-day operational expenses and advancing of our mission, however; those are essentially long-term savings with restrictions to ensure it is targeted for that long-term purpose. We still must generate income to make our local history magic happen. Your membership renewals, your individual contributions, your book purchases, your event attendance and more are essential to our nonprofit.

Please join me in pausing to reflect on Gaylor Forman and his generosity, and send up thoughts of gratitude for his prioritizing of our local historical society. As you can likely imagine, it is a very rare development for us or for any local historical society. It is a category of nonprofit organizations that can do so much more to uplift and enrich our local community if more of our neighbors showed just a little love to them. It doesn't have to be ours, specifically: Please invest what you can, be it time or talents or treasure, to your local historical or genealogical society. You'll be building a stronger community for us today and for the people that will follow in the years to come.

On behalf of past, present, and future local history advocates: Thank you, Gaylor.

Michael McGuinness

Gaylor W. Forman

August 21, 1923 ~ May 21, 2021

Became a member of the Society in November of 1977.

Elected to the Board of Directors in May of 1980.

Served on Board until May 21, 2011 - Director Emeritus.

THE 1857 OAKLAND COUNTY LANDOWNERS MAP

Our society has a map on display in our carriage house:

The map is one of around 300 produced by S.H. Burhans of Chicago. It's the first "landowners" map of the county, in which farmers and land-owner are shown. It's 5 feet wide by 6 feet high and was originally mounted on wooden dowels. The original cost of a map was \$6.00 or around \$200 in today's money.



These maps have a complex history and were by any measure difficult to produce. The process took two years, a period long enough that different landowners appear on different copies of the map, and there are 3 different map styles. In 1992, LeRoy Barnett of the State Archives of Michigan wrote a comprehensive history of these maps, which you can read here: <https://www.ocphs.org/pdf/1992-3/>

This summer, the Oakland County Historical Commission undertook the effort of finding as many of these maps as possible – as a result, we now know of 20 copies of the map. Several are on display while the remainder are in storage at various places around the county. It is a fascinating, very useful look at a snapshot in time for Oakland County.

If you would like to see this map or a copy of it in person, please visit:

- OCPHS – That's us! It's in our Carriage House.
- Clarkston/Independence Library Community Room
- Troy Historic Village (in the Poppleton School)
- Baldwin Public Library, Birmingham
- Hadley House Museum, Holly
- Northville Mill Race Park (in the Wash Oak Schoolhouse)
- Oakland County South Oakland Health Center, Southfield
- Warner Mansion, Farmington (currently closed for renovations)

Or, online, in lower quality, on our website at:

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

Since this article first appeared an original, unrestored copy of the 1857 First Landowners Map of Oakland County, casually referred to as a "Hess Map" was donated to the Society. Seeing its poor condition, we quickly accessioned it and put it away, not to be seen again for hopefully 50 years when your collections chair will no doubt be in worse condition than the map, when new technologies will allow its restoration without bankrupting anyone.

In a fit of some type of highly uninteresting mania, we realized that the fully restored, beautifully mounted 1857 First Landowners Map of Oakland County that hangs in our carriage house didn't have an accession number assigned to it. So we did that, based on its restoration date of 1982. Deep, detailed research reveals that we do not know where it came from, but boy are we happy to have it. Some of that research consisted of reading the bronze plaque mounted next to the map. Former president and director emeritus Gretchen Adler reports that it "might have come from the county", and we'll take that as a source, for sure, since her word is a lot better than ours. So much fun!

Dave Decker

ELIZABETH DENISON FORTH MURAL - SURPRISE VISIT!



The Congregation of St. James Episcopal Church on Grosse Ile has a very special relationship with Elizabeth Denison Forth. It is through Lisette's philanthropy and legacy that they have a church at all! They are quite proud of their benefactress.

Lisette's will stipulated that after taking care of her heirs and her just debts the remainder of her estate was to be used to establish a free church on Grosse Ile. St. James Episcopal was built on land donated by James Biddle and together with bequests from Lisette and Elizabeth Biddle, a church was built and the church and parish are still going strong today.

Joyce Turin, The original Historian at St James, and Cora Bradshaw, Pontiac Public Library Librarian, were instrumental in researching and organizing the planting of the tricolor birch tree and placing the memorial stone on Elizabeth Denison Forth Drive in Oak Hill Cemetery in 1988. The Michigan Historical Marker was placed November of 1992.

Kate Hartwell, the current Historian of St. James, along with Joyce Turin, the former historian, arranged for a group of 20 parishioners to visit Lisette's former property at Oak Hill Cemetery and to view the the 60-foot high mural of Elizabeth Denison Forth, by artist Zach Curtis, on the exterior of the Riker Building garage in Downtown Pontiac.

OCPHS Member Barbara Frye was thrilled to be asked to guide their tour.

Barbara Frye

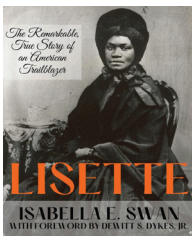


Photo Credits: Barbara L. Frye

Copies of the reprint of *Lisette* are available at the The History Center office or at our website:
<https://www.ocphs.org/product/lisette/>

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS REWARDS

Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society was established in 1874 by the descendants of those early settlers who made the trek to Michigan Territory and settled in what we now know to be Oakland County. We are coming up to our 150th birthday in 2024. We want you to come celebrate with us the incredible history of our Society and all of Oakland County!

OCPHS is a non-profit, member-based, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of Oakland County. We are not affiliated with any governmental unit. Our work is supported by modest annual membership dues, program fees, corporate and grant support, and tax-deductible donations. Membership is open to everyone. Annual memberships run until December 31.

You can join on line at our website:

<http://www.ocphs.org/membership-and-benefits/>

Student	\$15.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$35.00
Non Profit	\$20.00
Patron	\$100.00
Benefactor	\$200.00
Friend of OCPHS	\$500.00
Corporate Sponsor	\$500.00

We offer a membership level that suits your budget!
 Contact our Office or visit our website.

Membership fees include a digital copy of our Quarterly Publication *The Oakland Gazette*.

2023 COMING EVENTS

Governor Wisner's Home Available for Tours
Tours Available by Appointment, Contact the Office

Spring Cleaning Volunteer Days
April 15th & 16th, 12:00 to 4:00 pm

Outdoor Spring Flea Markets
Saturdays in May, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Dishes Past Historic Cuisine Pop-Up Dinner
Friday May 12th, 7:00 pm

Spring Auction
~ Details to be announced ~

Annual Meeting of the Members
*Saturday, May 20, 11:00 am
 at Historic Wisner School*

Governor Wisner Birthday Garden Party
*June 3rd, 5:00 to 7:00 pm
 in the Gardens*

*All events held at OCPHS Campus unless otherwise noted
 405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan*

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**OCPHS 149th ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE MEMBERS**
Saturday, May 20, 2023 ~ 11:00

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

Find us on facebook.com/OaklandHistoryCenter



Follow us on Twitter
[Twitter.com/OCPHS](https://twitter.com/OCPHS)



We regularly send out email updates between Gazette editions, including local history stories and details about upcoming events.

If you don't receive these and would like to be added to our email list, contact us today to let us know!

email: office@ocphs.org

phone: 248 338-6732

~ or message us on facebook ~



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ABOUT THE OAKLAND GAZETTE

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

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Editor: Barbara Frye

Gazette Crew: C. Cooper, P. Schmaltz, D. Decker, M. McGuinness

Gazette email: gazette@pinegrovewisner.org