

# Former governor's home embodies pioneer spirit, gracious hospitality

By KATIE KERWIN

There was no governor's mansion in Lansing, back in 1859 when Moses Wisner was elected to Michigan's highest office.

So Pine Grove, Wisner's Pontiac home, became the governor's office, as well as official residence.

An unusual blend of working farm and gracious official residence, Pine Grove remains today as testimony of the quickly-changing face of Michigan in the Civil War era.

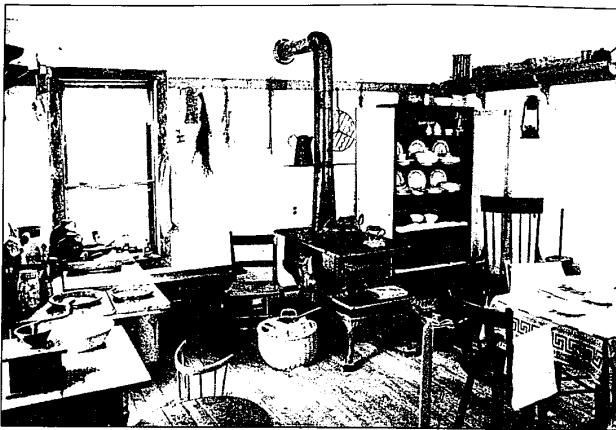
From his original purchase of 28 acres and a small building, Moses Wisner expanded his property to 160 acres of farm land, orchards and pine groves.

He built a large Greek Revival home, greenhouse, barn and carriage house, and continued additions to the house until his term as governor and the Civil War intervened.

The summer kitchen, complete with butter churn, rag-beater, old-fashioned popcorn popper, crockery jars, cast-iron cookware and flatirons, evokes images of good farm cooking produced by hard work and primitive methods.

Hanging along the walls are bunches of dried herbs, collected from the herb garden in back. The garden is tended these days by members of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. The society also maintains the Wisner home and conducts tours of house and grounds Tuesday-Saturday, 1-4 p.m.

**THE ONE-ROOM** schoolhouse, moved to the property 13 years ago, recalls the days when the "three Rs" were taught to the tune of the hickory stick. The severity of rows of wooden desks and bare floors is somewhat softened by the collection of antique dolls housed in the rear of the schoolroom and the quilting frame set up in the corner by the quilting guild. The quilters plan to move operations into the carriage house when the rebuilding is completed.



The Wisner's summer kitchen, bare-scrubbed and airy, contains many cooking utensils and household tools of the Civil War era, used by the farm wife in preparing meals and cleaning house.

Spinning is another traditional craft continued at the Wisner home under the auspices of the historical society. The house contains five antique spinning wheels upon which local spinners turn wool into yarn. A spinning and cording demonstration will be one of the highlights of the ice cream social at the house Sunday, Aug. 6.

An old-fashioned Christmas celebration is the other major annual event held in the Wisner house. Traditional trimmings, music and of course, a tree, are features of the "Victorian Christmas" program in early December.

**THE SITTING ROOM**, dining room, parlor and bedrooms of the mansion are filled with pieces donated by Oakland County residents, as well as many original Wisner furnishings. Horsehair chairs, hodge desks with pigeon-hole compartments and Moses Wisner's sleigh bed give the visitor a sense of how the house must have looked 100 years ago. Little touches, like a delicate white cotton nightgown laid out on the bed, a half-packed suitcase on the floor, papers and small books strewn across the desk, and a small evening bag and shawl dropped on the sofa, dispel the sterile atmosphere that

so often haunts museum homes and gives the Wisner house a lived-in feeling.

The oldest part of the house, its lower level, houses the offices and library of the historical society. The research library contains histories, maps, manuscripts and other information about Oakland County's past. The library is open to researchers by appointment.

Guides conduct leisurely tours of the house and grounds and extend the hospitality that has endured since the mansion received the governor's guests more than a century ago.

## Bachelor adds tub

Lots of people like nothing better than to jump into a hot tub after work. Some people like it so much that the latest craze is to make the tub out of redwood, build it big enough to be able to invite friends in, haul it outdoors and add a pump for a whirlpool effect.

Robert Adelhouser of Avon Township lives in a condominium with no room for a swimming pool or his own tennis court, but plenty of space for a hot tub on his patio.

"I know people with swimming pools who never even use them anymore," Adelhouser said. "But I'd say I use my hot tub about six nights a week."

Hot tubs originated in Japan, made their way to California and have since

moved east. The redwood is kiln dried and provides its own natural sealant after the wood has been soaked. The tubs hold from 200 gallons of water in a four foot model-to 1,200 in a party-size eight-footer.

Its makers claim the tubs offer everything from simple relaxation to "therapeutic relief." Water temperature is a bit warmer than body temperature, or it can be run with a heater in hot weather.

Once you have a firm base for the weight of the tub and the necessary electrical connections for the pump and natural gas for the heater, Hot Springs Inc., in Rochester, suggests adding scents to the waterlandscaping, even "mood lighting."



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