

# Suburban Life

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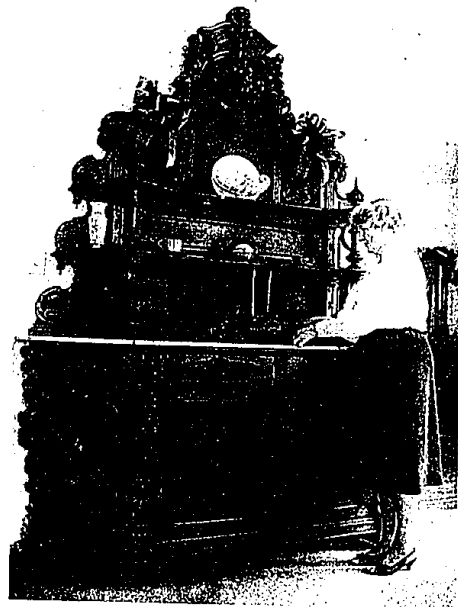
Thursday, December 27, 1984 O&E

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Pink bows and greenery in the museum's dining room is the work of floral decorators from French's Flowers & Gifts in Livonia. Gloria Quarterman, who is one of the museum's first docents, guides

guests through the old mansion in a Victorian blouse and skirt, fitting to the decor. The chandelier is a gift from Farmington-S Lions, authentic of the period with electrified fixtures.



Lawrence Mayer Florists put the holiday touches in the museum's drawing room, with focus on the marble topped mahogany sideboard. As well versed in the furnishings as she is in the history of the house, docent Mary Anchor tells guests about the ornately carved piece that was once owned by Hiram Walker and is now on loan to the Farmington Historical Museum by the Detroit Historical Society.

## Victorian style

### Old mansion dresses up for the holidays

The Farmington Historical Museum docents opened the doors to visitors this season for a tour of Victorian splendor enhanced with holiday decorations designed by 14 area florists to complement the mid-19th-century decor.

Docents add to the theme by donning long skirts and Victorian-styled waists for the guests who take a leisurely stroll through the mansion that was once the home of Michigan Governor Fred Warner.

There are no velvet cords to keep guests in line and no "Do Not Touch" signs. And, according to Margaret Walker, chairman of the museum committee, it will remain that way. "It is much freer this way. It is much more comfortable, more relaxed. We think it encourages guests to ask more questions, maybe stay a little longer, maybe enjoy a little more," she said.

The roster of docents Walker can call on is up to 40, each of whom has a thorough knowledge of the home's history and its furnishings. Docents volunteer for a given number of working hours every month, but they are likely to be called upon for any number of special events scheduled throughout the year, or to conduct private tours, and particularly to double duty through the holidays.

MOST OF THE docents who signed

up to conduct tours when the museum first opened its doors two and a half years ago are still active. Some, like Gloria Walpa, were once tour guests who found themselves so intrigued with the history, they wanted to become further involved with the house and grounds and restoration.

The restoration continues and the docents are never surprised, but always intrigued as to what has been changed, what has been added, what is new, and what is in the planning stage to come. The big change this month came from local florists, floral designers and Farmington Beautification Committee which decorated the front doorway. Farmer John's Greenhouse decorated the veranda and Village Green Florist decorated the Victorian parlor.

All of the decorators took special care to decorate the room of their choice in keeping with the way that room might have looked at the turn of the century. French's Flowers & Gifts decorated the dining room and Country Flowers & Gifts the summer kitchen. Lawrence Mayer Florists put the holiday touches to the drawing room, and Spring Brook Gardens did the same for the center staircase.

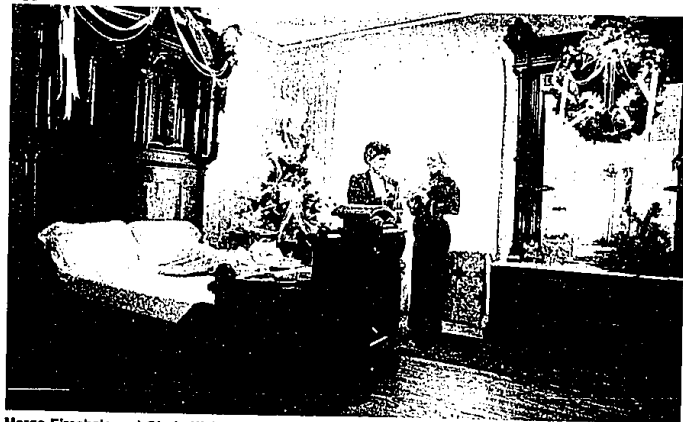
Harry Miller Flowers chose to decorate the music room where one of the museum's proudest possessions stands,

a Knabe grand player piano that played carols throughout the month, and where solists and groups furnished song for the guests.

The upstairs hallway was decorated by Flowers & Co. and the master bedroom by The Flower Barn. The library was decorated by Farmington Center Florists and the children's room by Schroeder's Flowers & Gifts.

The sitting alcove was decorated by McFarland's Florist & Greenhouse, and the Governor Warner Room by State Flower Galleries.

There are no open houses or visiting days scheduled for the museum for the next few months, but Walker said, "We are always open for group tours, or special-interest groups." These are made by appointment only, which can be arranged by calling Walker at 476-6349.



Margo Elrschele and Gloria Walpa are intrigued by a tussy mussy, a nosegay carried by Victorian ladies that is one of the pieces on display in the

museum's master bedroom. Decorators from The Flower Barn used pink net, pink silk orchids and streamers to give the room its holiday spirit.

Photos by Randy Borst



Focal point of the not-much-used Victorian parlor is the pier mirror which marked its owner as a man of wealth. The lace curtains at docent Gloria Walpa's left are authentic reproductions of the era. The original gaslight chandelier that can be seen at top left was a gift from Michigan State Organization of Quakers. The room is decorated with red, white and green by Village Green Florist in Livonia.



The Knabe grand piano, which was known in its day as the Rolle Royce of the player pianos, dominates the museum's music room. Docent Margo Elrschele shows that it can also be played manually,

but generally on visiting days the docents choose to play one of the museum's 50 rolls for their guests. Decorations for the room was provided by Harry Miller Flowers in Farmington Hills.