

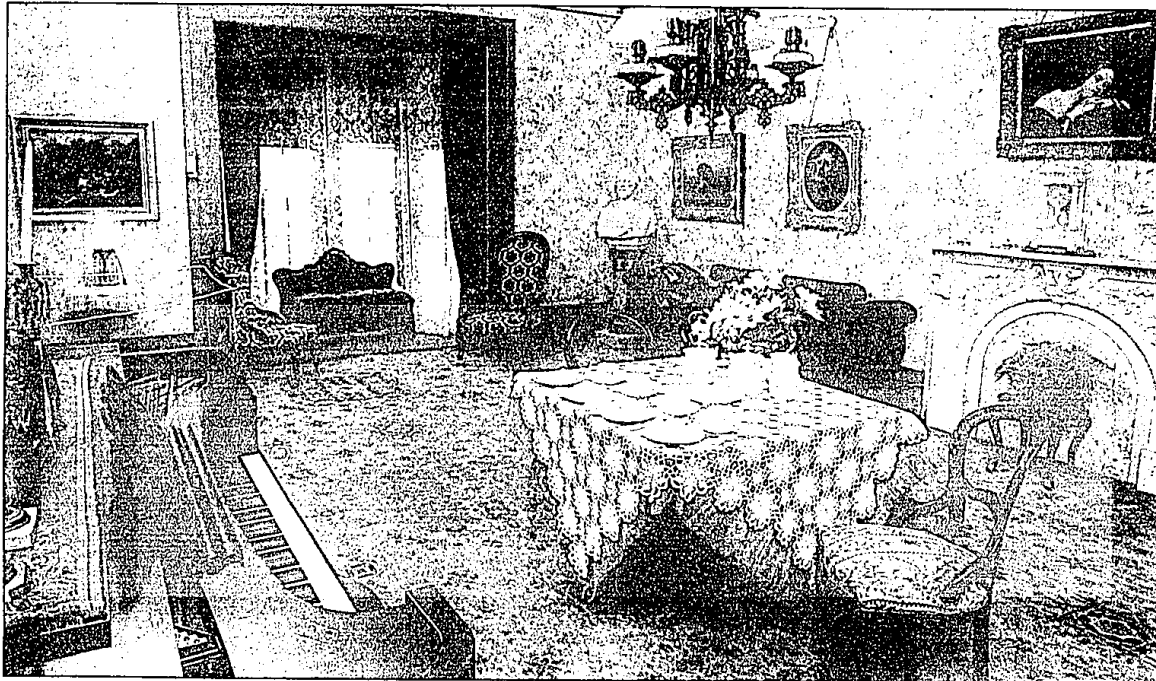
Creative Living

Co Abatt editor/644-1100



Thursday, January 15, 1987 O&E

(F1E)



The living room of Pine Grove, the home of Governor Moses Wisner, is essentially the same as when the family lived there. The marble bust of the Governor is one of two, the other is in the State Capitol building. The room was only used on formal occasions such as weddings and funerals, so there has been very little wear and tear on the furnishings.

Looking back

Wisner house gives glimpse of 19th century life

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

THE DINING ROOM table is set for company with the gold banded double wedding ring china and the charter oak pattern sterling. The cozy, family sitting room is ready for the guests as soon as they finish their dessert.

The formal living room, used only for weddings, funerals and state affairs is in prime condition.

And while visitors to the home of Michigan's 13th governor, Moses Wisner, won't be having dinner, they will be able to savor the flavor of life more than a century ago. The home, 405 Oakland, Pontiac, was a gentleman's farm which served as the governor's office and official residence during 1859-1860.

Beverly Laako, the Society's executive secretary and administrative coordinator, said that while Governor Wisner made occasional trips to Lansing, "the state of Michigan was run from here."

OWNED AND MAINTAINED by the Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society since it was purchased from the Wisner family in

1945, the home has recently undergone considerable restoration.

This was made possible by a \$14,000 gift from First of America Bank S.E. Region. The electrical wiring has been expanded and updated, new, period pattern wallpaper was put in the entry hall, the sitting room and the dining room. New red patterned carpet, handloomed in Belgium, was installed in the entry hall and on the stairs last week. All of the European-style oil paintings in elaborate gold frames, original to the house, were recently restored at Detroit Institute of Arts.

Laako said, "What we're trying to do is take it back as closely to the original as possible and to let people know what life was like during the Victorian period."

"The kids who come here are all questions. They love the summer kitchen. They can't imagine life without a microwave, food cooked from scratch and food cooked on a wood stove. The guide holds up the (kitchen) utensils and the kids try to guess what they were used for."

She said visiting grade school classes often borrow the old text books ahead of time and spend half

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— Beverly Laako
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Oakland County
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a day in the one-room school house on the grounds, sitting at the old fashioned desks, using the McGuffey readers, old spellers, arithmetic and geography books and doing lessons on old slate boards.

Later they tour the house and grounds making a full day of activity.

Tours, booked in advance, are given daily year around. The house is open to the general public 1-4 p.m. the third Sunday of the month in spring, fall and winter. During the summer tours for the public are given 1 and 2:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday.

Laako said, "The library is in use

SHE SAID THERE'S a substantial file of death records, complete with information about each person and a lot of other information about Oakland County and its people that can't be found anywhere else.

Gov. Wisner's personal library, in cases in the upstairs hallway, has records of the 22nd Regiment in the Civil War which was formed at the house.

As she walked from room to room, Laako pointed out the furniture and accessories which are original to the house and the many pieces which were donated by descendants of the Wisner family and other Oakland County residents.

She said that while not all of the present furnishings were in the

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

house while the Wisners lived here, all of them are appropriate to the periods during which they occupied it.

While serving as a colonel in 22nd Regiment at a Union Army camp near Lexington, Ky., Moses Wisner contracted typhoid fever and died in 1863. His second wife, Angelina, mother of three of his four children, lived in the house until her death in 1905.

After she was widowed, she converted a downstairs room her husband had used as an office into a first floor bedroom. It is now furnished as a bedroom with an attractive display of handmade 19th century quilts and coverlets.

Volunteer guides, dressed in period costume, describe customs of the time, how the house grew, which rooms were added later and which are original. The tour gives a pleasant glimpse of a way of life that has disappeared and an interesting profile of the governor/soldier who shaped Michigan history.

Descendants honored

Three direct descendants of Gov. Moses Wisner will be presented with special Sesquicentennial certificates at the governor's home, Pine Grove, on Sunday, Jan. 18.

These only remaining direct rel-

atives are David Clark Wallace, Jr. great, great grandson of Moses and Angelina Wisner and his 4- and 5-year-old sons David McGregor Wallace and James Robert Wallace. The family lives in South Lyon.



Kitty Daggy dressed in period costume to give the final touch to the atmosphere of the Wisner house dining room. The flat silver, the charter oak pattern, was chosen by the Wisners because it was appropriate for Oak-

land County residents. Daggy is a member of the board of directors of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Her husband, Donald Daggy, is president.



The room, directly off the entry hall was used as a bedroom by Angelina Wisner after the Governor died. While he was living, he used it as a first-floor office. Notice the coverlet on

the stand with the Oakland County name in the corner. It is one of many on display in the room.