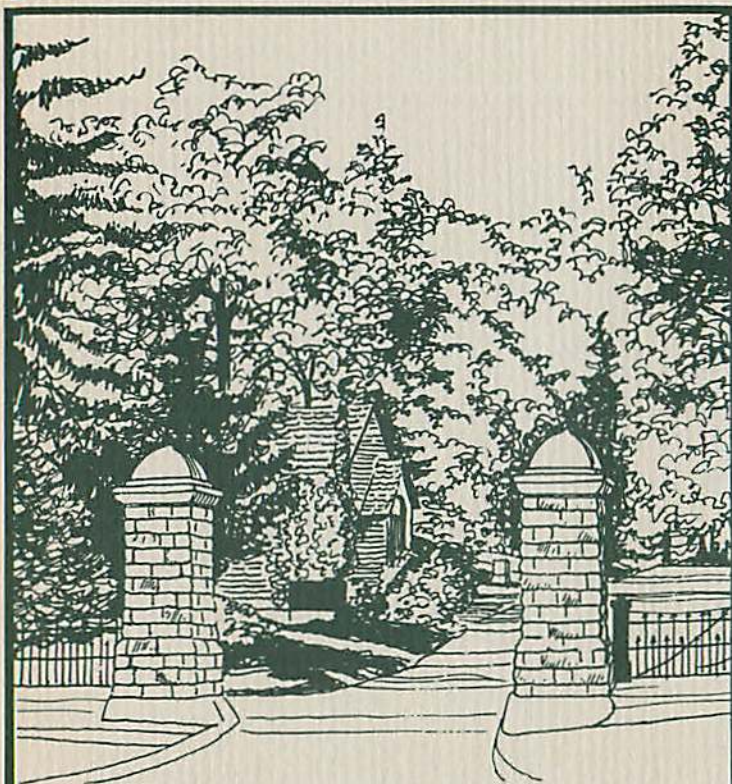


# Oak Hill Cemetery Pontiac, Michigan



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**A  
Walking  
Tour**



City of Pontiac

Mayor Walter Moore



Department of Public Works & Services  
216 University Drive  
Pontiac, Michigan 48055

Superintendent  
William Foster  
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Researched and Compiled by:  
Cora G. Bradshaw

# Introduction

Is it any wonder Oak Hill Cemetery has stood sure since its founding in 1822 with such constant, loyal sentinels? Gipsy, our resolute, fond bloodhound sits watching where his master lies; a cannon stands aimed near General Richardson's monument and Governor Wisner's guardian angel is on guard again.

Many of Pontiac school children appreciate these pieces of Pontiac's history and are knowledgeable of much of its rich history. Their interest and zeal to preserve, restore and maintain their past showed forth in the project to replace Moses Wisner's guardian angel.

Thanks to our founding fathers for setting aside this "burying ground". It has become the resting place of Generals, a Medal of Honor winner, a Governor and Pioneers of our city. It is one of the oldest continuously operated such institutions in Michigan.

The city of Pontiac and the Pontiac Area Historical and Genealogical Society are pleased to have you share such an important part of Pontiac's history, in celebration of the Bicentennial of our United States Constitution.



# History

Oak Hill Cemetery was given to the citizens of Pontiac on June 1, 1822 and was the first land for a village cemetery. It was "...to be occupied and used forever as a burying ground...and to no other use whatever." In 1839, when Capt. Hervey Parke was employed by the village of Pontiac to survey outlot 9 of the original plat of the village, Oak Hill Cemetery was laid out. Many of the early pioneers who had been buried near the intersection of Saginaw and Huron Streets and on private property were reinterred here after 1839.

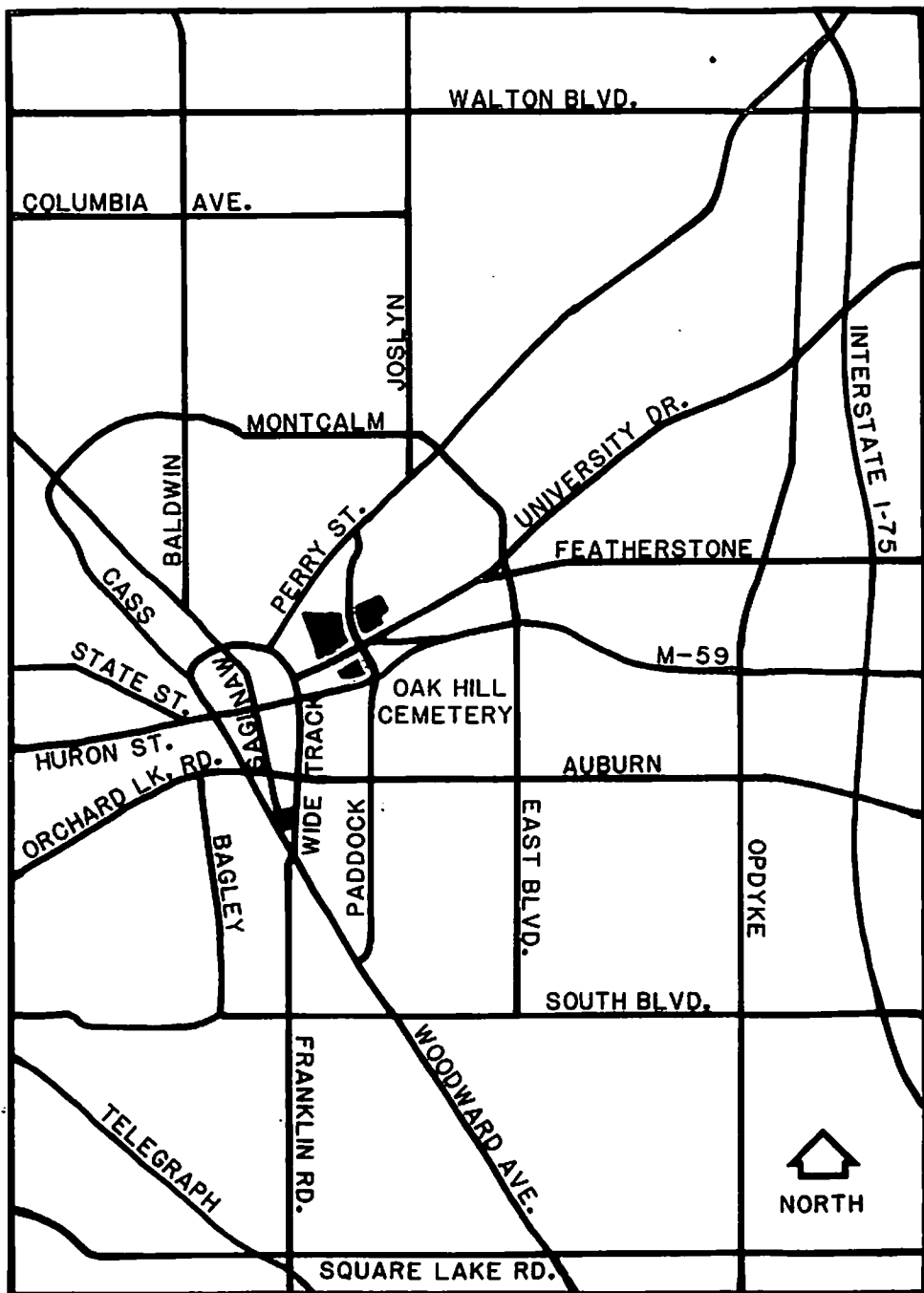
Oak Hill occupies the highest point of land in the city. The cemetery office was erected across University Dr., north of the Clinton River on the second addition of cemetery space in 1839. The third addition is on the east side of the original cemetery across Paddock St.

Today Oak Hill is one of two Pontiac Municipal Cemeteries and operates as a part of the city's Department of Public Works and Services.



# Oak Hill Cemetery

## Pontiac, Michigan





*Angel  
(At Moses Wisner's Gravesite)*



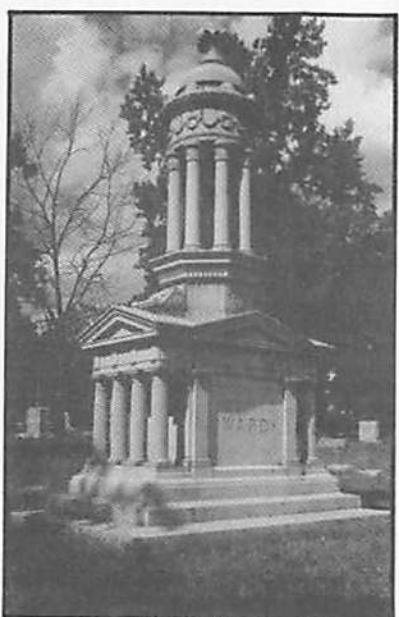
*Gipsy  
(The Hodges dog)*



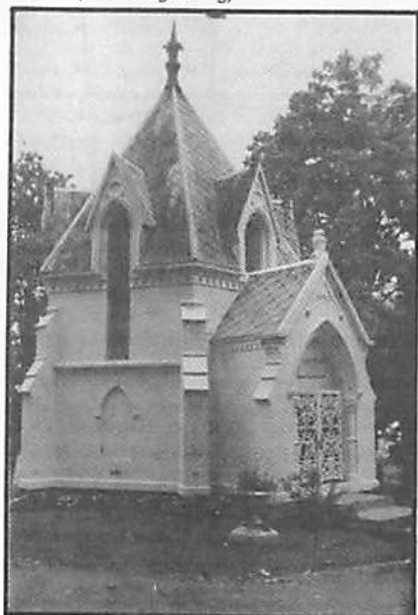
*Buckland's Chapel*



*Glacierite*



*David Ward's Monument*



*Petrie's Mausoleum*



*Cannon  
(At Israel Richardson's Gravesite)*

# Key to Map

1. **Stephen Mack** - born Lyme, Connecticut 1764. He and his father, Solomon rendered service in the Revolutionary War with the patriots. Stephen continued his interest in military matters and received his title of Colonel while in command of one of the Vermont troops. Arrived in Pontiac as business manager for the Pontiac Company. He purchased from the U.S. Government, on installment plan, 2,440 acres in the central part of the present city. The first sawmill, trading post, blacksmith, gristmill and woolen mill were built by him. Under his management the Pontiac Company reserved lots for schools, churches and a cemetery. His daughter, Lovina was the first white settler to die in Pontiac. Mack died in 1826.
2. **Isaac Ruggles** - born Connecticut, 1785. Educated at Yale. Came to Oakland County from Chenango County, N.Y. in 1824 as a missionary, receiving \$100 per year for his services. Organized the First Congregational Church of Pontiac in 1831 and others in the area. He and his wife operated a school for several years in their home. He died 1857.
3. **Michael Crofoot** - born Montgomery County, New York, March 14, 1822. Was admitted to the bar in Rochester, N.Y. previous to 1846. Came to Pontiac in fall of 1845 and was probate judge and prosecuting attorney. He gave much encouragement and attention to Pontiac's schools and the building up and improvement of the Oakland County Agricultural Society of which he was an officer. An elementary school was named in his honor. He died May 11, 1884.
4. **Don Carlos Buckland** - born Tunbridge, Orange County, Vermont, August 22, 1813. Was son of Stephen Mack's daughter, Rhoda. His father, Asher Buckland ran Mack's gristmill. D.C. Buckland ran a grocery store at the corner of Lawrence and Saginaw. Served as President of the Republican State Central Commission and the Republican

County Committee of Oakland County. In 1860 as Chairman of the State Committee took charge of the entire campaign in the state. He held the office of Pontiac Postmaster. He died September 23, 1888.

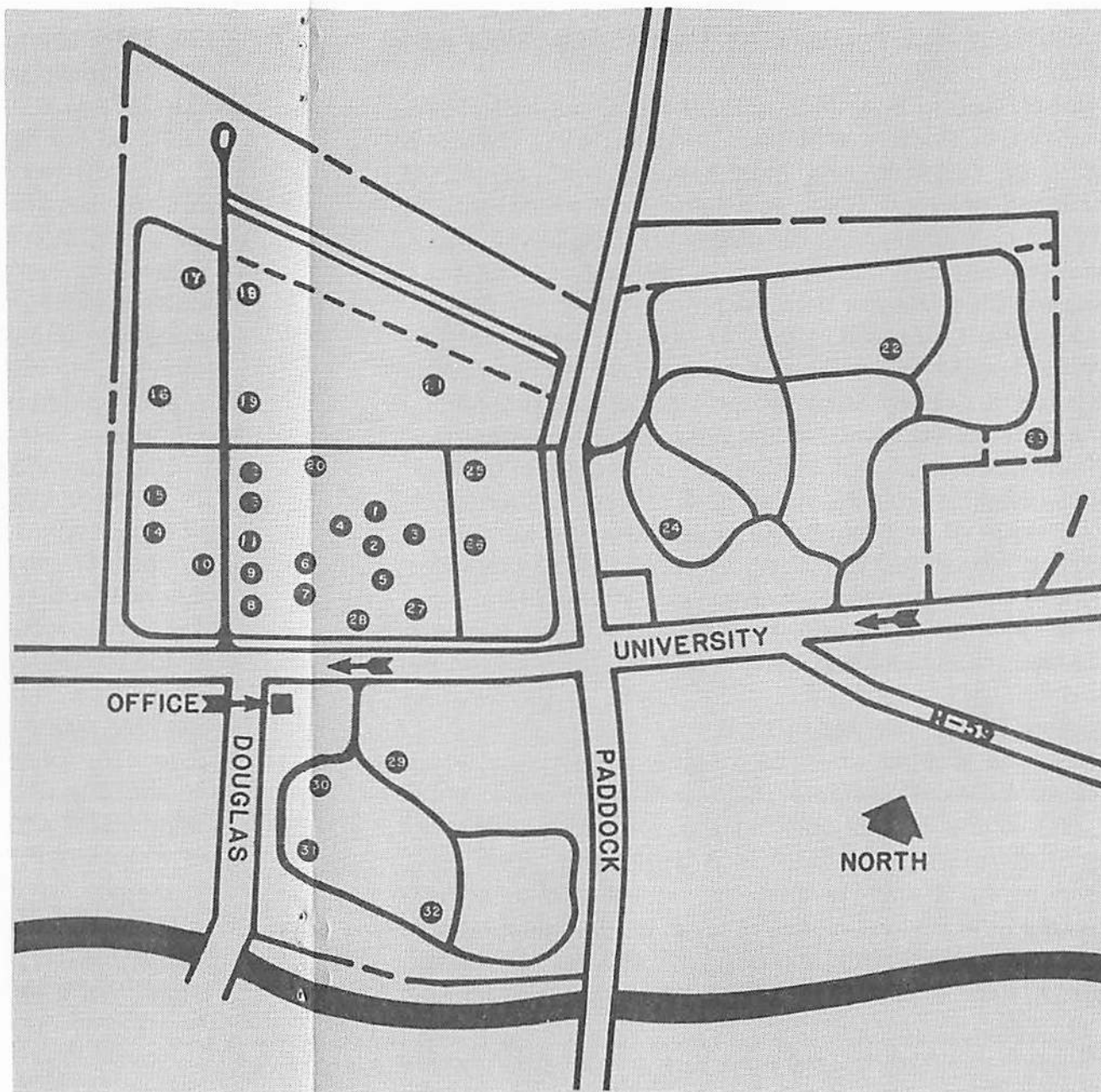
5. **Gideon O. Whittemore** - born Vermont, August 12, 1800. Came to Michigan territory from Vermont in 1820. Practiced law at Pontiac in 1826 and served as judge of probate. From 1846-1848 was secretary of state and a member of the 1850 constitutional convention. Was a member of the University of Michigan board of regents from 1852 to 1856 and helped to choose its present site in Ann Arbor. James, Gideon's son, was one of the first graduates of University of Michigan law school. He married Stephen Mack's daughter, Harriet, and founded a settlement, Tawas City, in what is now Iosco County, on Saginaw Bay north of the thumb. He moved his family there and lived there until his death in 1863.
6. **Moses Wisner** - born Springport, Cayuga County, New York, June 3, 1815. Came to Michigan in 1837 to Lapeer County. He left that area to try his fortune in Pontiac. He began to study law in his brother George's office. Was admitted to the bar and appointed prosecuting attorney by Governor Woolbridge. Built a beautiful Greek Revival home in 1844. In 1859 Wisner became Governor of Michigan. His home served as the governor's mansion until the end of his term in 1860. This home, Pine Grove, is now an historic site. Acting as Colonel, he led the twenty-second Michigan Infantry to the Civil War and died of typhoid fever in Kentucky, January 5, 1863.
7. **Wisner's Guardian Angel** stands at the gravesite of Governor Moses Wisner. The present bronze statue replaces the original stone that vandals destroyed in 1980. A popular but undocumented story tells that Wisner had a dream about his guardian angel. He drew a picture of it and after his death his wife, Angeolina had a stone facsimile of the drawing placed at his gravesite. In 1988, the Pontiac school children under the direction of Cora G. Bradshaw, a retired Pontiac teacher, by way of a can and

bottle refund drive, a raffle and private contributions were able to raise money to pay for the new statue. It was dedicated by the school children on June 2, 1988.

8. **Israel B. Richardson** - born Fairfax, Vermont, December 26, 1815. Graduated from West Point in 1841. Fought in the Semonile and Mexican Wars. For his bravery and daring he was named "Fighting Dick". He is said to have captured the helmet, sword and armor of Santa Ana. In 1855, he resigned from the army, and came to Pontiac and practiced law. In 1862, he offered his services for the Civil War when volunteers were called and was appointed Colonel of the 2nd Michigan Infantry. Was in the first battle of Bull Run. Because of his bravery in the peninsula campaign under McClennen he was advanced to Major General. He was wounded and died at the battle of Antietam, November 3, 1862.
9. **Cannon** - Stands near gravesites of General Isreal Richardson and Governor Moses Wisner as a monument to all the soldiers and sailors buried here at Oak Hill. It was presented to the city of Pontiac in 1870 by S.M. Legget of Commerce.
10. **Elmer Webster** - born White Lake township, February 10, 1855. Was a graduate of the Literary and Law department of the University of Michigan. Was county superintendent of schools and known as one of the founders of the present school system. Served on Pontiac's Board of Education for twenty-six years. He also gave his services to the city of Pontiac as a member of the board of supervisors and public works. He died June 3, 1924.
11. **Mrs. Hanna F. Stout** - birthplace not known, 1845. Was a member of the Ladies Library Association that was founded in 1882. She was its first president; wanted a library for the people of Pontiac. The Association sponsored many projects to raise money to start a library. The first library opened on Lawrence Street in the Gazette Building. She left a building on Saginaw and Auburn Streets to the Association. In her will, she left instructions to sell the building and use the money to build a perma-

# Oak Hill Cemetery Pontiac, Michigan

1. Stephen Mack
2. Issac Ruggles
3. Michael Crofoot
4. Don Carlos Buckland
5. Gidech O. Whittemore
6. Moses Wisner
7. Wisner's Guardian Angel
8. Israel Richardson
9. Cannon
10. Elmer Webster
11. Hanna F. Stout
12. Robert Scott
13. Henry Clay Ward
14. Schuyler Hodges
15. Gipsy
16. Robert LeBaron
17. Harold Furlong
18. Aaron Perry
19. Joseph Todd
20. Joseph T. Copeland
21. Hervey Parke
22. Allen Noble
23. M.L. Spears
24. Elizabeth Denison Forth's  
Tree & Marker
25. The Petrie Vault
26. Pudding Stone
27. Augustus Baldwin
28. Charles Palmer
29. David Ward
30. Buckland Memorial Chapel
31. Ephraim Horvland
32. Aaron Riker



nent home for the library. Her husband, Byron Stout, who was a former state legislator and U.S. Congressman, left the library \$5,000.00. These funds were used to construct the building on Lawrence and Williams Streets. That building is now Pontiac's Art Center. Mrs. Stout died February, 1892.

12. **Robert Scott** - born Jedburgh, Scotland, June 25, 1826. Arrived in Pontiac with his family in 1865. Owned a carriage business and manufactured road carts and wagons for export. His shop was run on the profit sharing plan for his employees. His daughter, Mary Day, became the wife of Henry Clay Ward. He died May 11, 1904.
13. **Henry Clay Ward** - born Richmond, Macomb County, Michigan, October 6, 1851. At age 14 years old H.C. Ward bought 513 acres of land from the government in Crawford County, Michigan and became a prosperous lumberman. He owned many acres of apple orchards in Pontiac. His wish was that every boy and girl in the U.S. could see his orchards as an object lesson to them upon the value of early thrift. He was known as the largest sheep owner east of Chicago. Franklin Blvd. was layed out by him; trees were set along that thoroughfare, naming it in honor of his son, Franklin. Henry Clay Ave. was named for himself and Mary Day Ave. for his wife. He owned gold, copper, and silver mines in the western United States. He died in 1915.
14. **Schuyler Hodges** - born New Hampshire, April 1, 1798. Came to Michigan about 1822; settled in Pontiac about 1823 where he engaged in the mercantile business; served as Sheriff 1828-29; was a member of the city's first board of trustees and Postmaster; completed and opened the Hodges House (said to be the finest hotel in the state). He married the daughter of Major Oliver Williams, the founder of Waterford, Michigan and died April 29, 1845.
15. **Gipsy** - a dog that belonged to the Schuyler Hodges family and is said to be buried next to his master's gravesite. The marker that looks like a dog has these

inscriptions: "Courage, Fidelity and Love" - "For where shall there ever be found a friend like my resolute fond bloodhound."

16. **Robert LeBaron** - born Batavia, New York, June 27, 1838: Began study of medicine at 14 years of age; graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861 at the outbreak of the Civil War; received the appointment of Assistant Surgeon of the old Fourth Michigan Infantry; during the latter part of that two-year period, served as Surgeon of the regiment; was assigned to the Army of the Potomac, serving until 1864. He came to Pontiac after being mustered out of service in August, 1864 and established himself in medical practice. He was President of the Pontiac Board of Education. A school and a street bear his name. He died July 15, 1926.
17. **Harold A. Furlong** - born in Pontiac in 1885. He attended schools in Pontiac, Saginaw and Springfield, Illinois; completed three years undergraduate work at Michigan State College before enlisting for military service in 1917; distinguished himself at Blancheville, France when his company's commander and other members were killed, he moved ahead of American lines and took a position behind a line of German machine guns, putting four nests out of action. He delivered twenty German prisoners to American lines. For these feats he received the Medal of Honor. He never wanted praise for this because he felt he owed a debt to his fellow soldiers. After his discharge, he earned a medical degree from the University of Michigan in 1924 and opened a medical practice in Pontiac in 1929. He served as a member of Pontiac General Hospital's staff for fifty years, delivering over 9,000 babies in area hospitals. He retired in 1976. The Harold A. Furlong, M.D. Maternity Unit was dedicated in his honor in 1982. He founded the Pontiac Arts Center. The Furlong Building was named in his honor in 1978. He died July 28, 1987.
18. **Aaron Perry** - born in Oakland County, November 11, 1848. He attended schools in Clarkston and Ann Arbor; taught school for several years, then decided to become

a lawyer. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1870; was elected to the office of prosecuting attorney in 1878; served as president of the Bar Association of Oakland County. Named for him are: a park, a street and a large cemetery, Perry Mount Cemetery, that was started in 1923. He died 1920.

19. **Joseph Todd** - born in Warsaw, New York February 11, 1765. He enlisted for service in the Revolution in April, 1781 while still a resident in his birthplace; came with the first fourteen settlers to Pontiac. The others were his son-in-law, Orrison Allen and William Lester and their families. They reached Pontiac the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 1819 and occupied the one log house that the Pontiac Company built making a little community of fourteen people. Todd lived to see the village of Pontiac a thriving one. He died in Bloomfield, September 21, 1843.
20. **Joseph T. Copeland** - born in New Castle, Maine, May 6, 1813. He settled at St. Claire, Michigan in 1844; served as judge of the county court from 1846 to 1849 and came to Pontiac in 1851 and was elected circuit court judge from 1851-1857. He built a home on Orchard Lake and resided there until enlisting for the Civil War. He became a brigadier general in 1862. Resigned November 8, 1865 and lived in Orange Park, Florida until his death in 1893.
21. **Hervey Parke** - born Middle Haddam, Connecticut, April 14, 1790. Concluded his studies to become a surveyor at age nineteen. Married Mercy Bronson, purchased a farm and taught school during the winter. Left central New York in company with three more persons March 21, 1821 and traveled 500 miles carrying a knapsack forty-five pounds weight, including his surveying instruments. Arrived in Detroit after sixteen days travel through mud and water in Canada. In the fall of 1823, bought land in Pontiac Township and built a log house in 1824, which his family occupied until 1832, when he built a house near the toll gate on the Detroit road (Woodward Ave.). His work as surveyor extended over different portions of Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. He was hired in 1839 by the Village

of Pontiac to survey outlot 9 of the original plat of the village, Oak Hill Cemetery was laid out. He held the office of Sheriff one term. He died October 3, 1879.

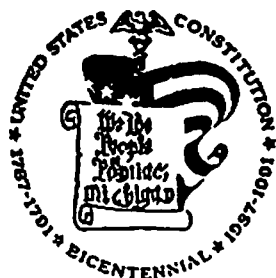
22. **Allen Noble** - born in Jacksonville, Florida, 1906. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1932 with a degree in history and political science. He worked as the first Black social worker for the Michigan Department of Social Services; taught aliens in preparation for citizenship in the Pontiac School District. In 1937, he became the first Black uniformed policeman. He and a friend, Ed Salter, formed the Southwest Community Center that became the Urban League in 1949. The center's primary concerns were housing, jobs, education and improving black/white relations in Pontiac. Noble retired in 1963 from the police department, but worked in the courts until his death in 1974.
23. **M.L. Spears** - born Memphis, Tennessee. He came to Pontiac in 1920 after finishing Meharry Medical College. He became Pontiac's first Black doctor, and the first doctor in Michigan to administer penicillin. Dr. Spears was a minister at Newman A.M.E. Church. He died September 1945
24. **Elizabeth Denison Forth's Tree and Marker** - Mrs. Forth, a black woman born prior to 1793, achieved freedom from slavery and purchased land in Pontiac. The Pontiac Company's minutes book shows that on April 21, 1825, Stephen Mack and his wife gave a quit-claim deed for four lots that amounted to 48 1/2 acres to Elizabeth Denison (she married Scipio Forth in 1827). The section of Oak Hill east of Paddock is her original property and extends into the Pontiac Knolls subdivision. The city of Pontiac planted the tricolored birch in her honor October, 1987. The marker was dedicated July 30, 1988 under sponsorship of the Pontiac Area Historical and Genealogical Society.
25. **The Petrie Vault** - was built by Charles Petrie who was born in Madison County, New York, August 19, 1819. He began a career as a civil engineer employed on the Great

Western Railroad and came into Michigan in 1846; employed as general manager of Central Mining Co. and moved to Pontiac in 1879. He died in 1895.

26. **Pudding Stone** - Was formed and settled on the Grayley farm during the Ice Age. It is the largest of its kind known to man. The Grayley family donated the stone to the city of Pontiac. A piece of it was cut off and sent to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. It was made a memorial for the Grayley family.
27. **Augustus C. Baldwin** - born Salina, New York December 24, 1817. He came to Pontiac in 1837 and taught school; attended the Pontiac branch of the University of Michigan and was admitted to the bar in 1842. He served as Brigadier general of the 5<sup>th</sup> brigade of the Michigan militia from 1846-1862. He was elected to the 38<sup>th</sup> Congress from the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional district; was judge for four years and known as the "Wise Old Counselor of Oakland County". Died January 21, 1908.
28. **Charles H. Palmer** - born Lenox, Madison County, New York in 1814. In 1847 he became principal of Romeo Academy; was a regent of the University of Michigan. In 1854 entered upon a career of mining development and operation. First opened and managed the Pewabic Coppermine. He became very successful in the mining and railroad business. Died in 1887.
29. **David Ward** - born Keene, Essex County, New York in 1822. He spent his early life as a schoolmaster and surveyor; graduated from University of Michigan's medical school in 1851. After the loss of a patient soon after the start of his medical practice, he returned to the occupation of surveying. He surveyed pine lands in Michigan and received one-third of the land he surveyed as payment. It is said through his efforts many of his associates became millionaires. He built a beautiful home on Orchard Lake. At the time of his death, Ward was rated the richest person in Michigan, having a fortune of about \$15 million. The picturesque hand carved monument at Oak Hill that was copied after memorials in Washington, D.C. attests to his wealth. Died May 29, 1900.

30. **Buckland Memorial Chapel** - was completed November 4, 1898; a structure of old English style, built of Berea sandstone with a roof of German mottled tiling. The windows are of opalescent glass; set in the rear walls are three memorial tablets of solid bronze bearing inscriptions in memory of Don C. Buckland, Mrs. Sarah A. Buckland and Mrs. Harry Hamilton, a daughter.
31. **Ephraim Howland** - born in White Lake Township, May 1, 1841. Built a factory on West Pike Street that manufactured earth moving equipment. He was a director of the Michigan Agriculture Society and was president of the society when the State Fair was brought to Pontiac for a number of years largely through his efforts. He built the Howland Theater in 1904-1905 which at that time was Pontiac's most imposing playhouse. The theater had its formal opening and took in \$1,300.00. He died March, 1926.
32. **Aaron W. Riker** - born in Grosse Pointe, 1830. He was among the earliest medical students at the University of Michigan. He practiced in Fenton for 42 years where he served on the village council and the school board. Two more generations of Riker doctors attended the University of Michigan medical school and are buried at Oak Hill. They are: John D., who also was mayor of Pontiac in 1904; John's son, Aaron D., who with his mother, Mittie Adams Riker, built the Riker Building. Aaron W. Riker died October 31, 1909.





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A Bicentennial City of the United States  
Constitution Project  
Sponsored By:

The Pontiac area Historical & Genealogical Society  
and the City of Pontiac  
Department of Public Works & Services

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Sources used for this booklet were:

- - The History of Oakland County, 1817-1877;
- - The History of Oakland County, Michigan, 1912, by Thaddeus D. Seeley; Historic Michigan, Vol. III, An Account of Oakland County, edited by Lillian Drake Avery; Portrait Biographical Album of Oakland County, Michigan, 1891.



