



The Pinery

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GENERAL MEETING OF PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY -

At Nelsonville on April 15. This is one of our Circuit or out in the County meetings.

1854 marks the beginning of the village of Nelsonville located in the northern part of the Town of Amherst, sixteen miles east of Stevens Point. The village not only has an interesting past history which indicates its importance to the surrounding community, but unlike many small villages today, has a number of thriving businesses at the present time, even though some of these industries are very different from those of the past. It is also a village with a future.

Some of the citizens in the village have been delving into the past and will present some of their findings to the Portage County Historical Society on Wednesday evening, 8:00 o'clock, April 15, 1964. The meeting will be held in the church parlors of the local village church.

TWENTY TWO ATTEND MEETING -

Twenty two Portage County Historical Society members were in attendance at Iola, Wisconsin on Saturday, March 23, when the Iola Historical Society was host for the 3rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Region of the Wisconsin Council of Local History. Mrs. E. A. Lutz of Iola, Regional Representative on the Council, presided.

Dr. Leland C. Pomainville of the South Wood County Historical Corporation, and former Regional Representative on the Council told that the South Wood County Group had been presented the Civil War Award in June 1963 for their seven outstanding meetings during the year featuring Civil War memorabilia.

He gave information relative to the content of the meetings.

Mr. Wm. Schereck of the State Society, who is the State Society representative on the Council, and Mr. Ray Sivesind, of the State Society Historic Sites and Markers division spoke on the Councils Historic Markers and the proposed establishment of a state marker registry which would include all approved regional and local markers.

Mr. Chester Krause of Iola, nationally known as the publisher of the National Numismatics Magazine, spoke on Civil War currency. Stating that much of history could be learned from the currency of a country, he presented an interesting talk on the development of U. S. currency previous to the Civil War. He also described the 17 denominations of coins minted during the Civil War, talked about Confederate currency and explained the display cases he had arranged. He had on display an Indian Peace Medal given to a Winnebago tribe in 1836, Civil War Bank Notes of both the Union and Confederacy, and in one case a map of Wisconsin in 1853 with state bank notes around it.

Reports were given by six of the eleven Societies that comprise the region. These reports covered the year's work of each group.

The Iola Ladies Chorus in Norwegian costumes, directed by Mrs. L. J. Smith who was also accompanist, sang three numbers: "This is My Country," "Send Out Thy Light," and "Let a Smile be Your Umbrella."

The main speaker was Mr. Gordon A. Bubolz of Appleton, Chairman of the Wolf River Basin Regional Planning Commission, who spoke on WOLF RIVER PLANNING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN OUR FUTURE WELL BEING. He outlined the development of this pilot project and stated that the County Boards in the Wolf River watershed had

created the Commission to promote and carry out the regional planning idea, which is to preserve and perpetuate, also to educate the people of the region comprising the 223 miles of the river and its 11 main tributaries relative to this preservation and perpetuation.

The meeting began with a 12:30 luncheon in the Iola-Scandinavia High School multi-purpose room and ended with a 4:30 social coffee hour.

REPORT GIVEN -

Miss Alice Gordon, Secretary of the Portage County Historical Society gave the following report at the Regional Meeting held at Iola on March 21, 1964.

We have had a number of changes of officers during the past year. After the resignation of Malcolm Rosholt as president, Mr. N. R. Kampenga, vice president, who heads the library department at Wisconsin State College, Stevens Point, became our president. Marie Swallow is now vice-president. Since the resignation of Mrs. Win Rothman as treasurer, Mrs. N. R. Kampenga is acting as treasurer pro tem until the next election.

One of the continuous projects of our society has been the erection of markers to commemorate historical spots in the county. Mr. Rosholt, as president, spent much time in documenting and composing the script for the markers. The inscription on the marker at Whiting Village near Stevens Point was the most recent one approved by the Directors - this at the May 1963 meeting. Markers previously approved were for the village of Rosholt and the Market Square in Stevens Point. The state historical marker for the DuBay Trading Post on Highway 51 north of Stevens Point near Lake DuBay was suggested by our Society and its text was also written by Mr. Rosholt. A marker for the village of Almond has also been approved.

Since its organization the County Society has sponsored area or circuit meeting in various communities in the county. Arrangements are in progress for one at Nelsonville on April 15. This village owes its beginning to Jerome Nelson one of the most honored pioneers of Portage County.

During this year the Society has engaged in various activities concerned with the following: 1) Attempted to assist in the creation of a park site and recreation area at Yellow Banks (a mile west of Plover on the Wisconsin River). Although much has been done on this our hopes have not been realized to date. 2) A second project related to the complete revision of house numbering and street naming in Stevens Point. This is being sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce who presented their plans and views at a Society meeting. At the same meeting, Mrs. Win Rothman and Mr. C. W. Nason of the society presented briefly some historic and storied associations of present street names. After polling opinions of members the society went on record as favoring the house re-numbering but recommended that some plan be worked out in street numbering, lettering or naming whereby the names of pioneer now used on streets be retained and others be used. 3) A third project has been in connection with the leasing of city park property for the erection of a Chamber of Commerce building. At the December meeting of the Board of Directors, two representatives from the Chamber of Commerce presented the plan for erecting this building on the banks of the Wisconsin River at the foot of Main Street on land which the Society, in 1961 named Pioneer Park with the approval of the Common Council. This land was donated to the City of Stevens Point in 1945 by the late George Mead in behalf of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company expressly for Park purposes. At the present time the Common Council of Stevens Point has approved the leasing of land in the small park for a period of 99 years at \$1.00 a year to the Chamber of Commerce for the erection of its building. The Board of Directors of the Society has expressed opposition to this use of historic park land. Mr. Kampenga in one of his communications stated, "Since it is the clearly expressed purpose of a historical society to inform, educate, evaluate, and preserve to the best of its ability places and locations of historical significance, it is clearly our duty to protest this diversion of interest."

DUES -

Dues are always due on April 1st. This is the beginning of the 1964-65 year. So won't you remember and send your \$1.00 to Mrs. N. R. Kampenga, Treasurer. Her address is Route 1, Box 148, Stevens Point, Wis. Perhaps you can interest a friend in becoming a member. Take one along to the Nelsonville meeting on April 15.

EXHIBIT -

The Current exhibit of the Portage County Historical Society at the County City Building is made up of a few Agricultural scenes in Portage County. It is entitled PORTAGE COUNTY - THEN AND NOW. The pictures are on loan from the office of the County Agricultural Agent, Mr. M. P. Pinkerton.

STATE HISTORIC AREAS -

The historic sites operated by the State Historical Society open May 1st. If you have been to Villa Louis at Prairie du Chien, perhaps it was before some of the later acquisitions down there so it would be worth while putting a trip there in your plans for this summer.

Brisbois House down there is restored and restoration work has been begun on Rolette House.

Quoting from October 1963, Wisconsin Then and Now: "The Society hopes to reconstruct Rolette House to complete the picture of the 'big three' of old Prairie du Chien: Hercules Dousman, the millionaire builder of the Villa Louis; Michael Brisbois, the middle class small businessman; and Joseph Rolette, the rough and tumble, Daniel Boone-type of fur trader."

Joseph Rolette was the first fur agent in the area for John Jacob Astor's American Fur Trading Company. So great was his influence that he was called King Rolette by his friends and "Five More" by the Indians who found that before he closed any bargain, he would always ask for "five more."

Joseph Rolette's second wife was Jane Fisher, the niece of Michael Brisbois, and after the death of Rolette she became the wife of Hercules Dousman.

The discovery of the Rolette house for restoration is an interesting item in

itself. A hotel long in disrepair was found to have been built around it. But really, you should go down there to get the whole story.

Also down in that part of the state is Cassville with Stonefield, the village of the 1890's.

STEVENS POINT'S FIRST SCHOOLS -

Stevens Point's first school was taught by Miss Mandana Hale in 1846-47. At that time Stevens Point consisted of five families and some lumber camps. These families decided to club together and hire a teacher. One of their number, a Mr. Bangle, was going to Belvidere, Illinois for his family, and he was authorized to bring a teacher back with him, which he did.

Miss Hale was an excellent horsewoman and she drove one of the loaded ox teams from Belvidere, Illinois to teach a four month's term of school at Stevens Point.

The building used for school purposes was a hastily improvised board shanty, and could be used only during the warm weather. Miss Hale taught again the next year altho married at that time.

In 1849 a district was formed and a building erected at a cost of \$600. In 1858 the White School was built where the Lincoln School now stands. There were seventeen pupils in the White School at that time, counting what few came from Linwood.

In 1908 the 50th anniversary of the old White School and Pioneer Days was celebrated by a great Home Coming in which some of the first teachers and old pioneers came back to the city.

-as told by Mrs. G. B. Clark
in 1927

Note - Miss Hale became Mrs. N. F. Bliss, the mother of Geraldine Bliss Clark.

REMEMBER NEXT SOCIETY MEETING -

Will be at Nelsonville on April 15. Make an effort to attend and take a friend with you.