



The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN 54481
April 15, 1970 --- Vol. 15, No. 1

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING...

Thursday, April 23, 1970 is the date of our Society's Annual Meeting. It will be held in the Sentry Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. Reserve the evening for an occasion of considerable note.

Raymond Stanley Sivesind, Director of the Historic Sites and Marker Division of the State Historical Society will present his inimitable slide-lecture on restoration sites of Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway. This is the product of a nine-week Scandinavian seminar in which he was selected to participate as a delegate of the American Association of Museums.

Mr. Sivesind has been on the staff of the state society since 1948, has been in charge of planning, development and operation of that society's historic sites program since 1950 and has administered the Wisconsin official marker program since it was initiated in 1951. He is long-time consultant to the Wisconsin Conservation Department on the acquisition of new properties containing historical resources.

Mr. Sivesind's slide lecture was one of the highlights of the State Historical Society's 1968 Fall Institute. You will find it stimulating and beautiful.

ANNUAL DUES...

The time has come for paying the yearly dollar. Either bring it to the annual meeting or mail it to:

Portage County Historical Society
Route 1, Box 55
Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481

PORTAGE COUNTY NEWSPAPERS...

Almost a full complement of several Portage County newspapers are now available through the Society. At its February meeting the Society's board of directors accepted the responsibility of holding and servicing the newspapers. The Board expressed a strong desire to preserve in the original this major historical record of the county and city. The Stevens Point Daily Journal editors also stated their wish for this preservation.

For the most part, the newspapers constitute the bound files of the Stevens Point Daily Journal Company and the State Historical Society which now keeps these on microfilm. The Board was also pleased to accept a full run of the Amherst Advocate from Mrs. Edward Woodford of Amherst. These will be transferred from the publisher in the near future. The total newspaper files in concern consists of 228 volumes covering the titles and years noted:

The Wisconsin Pinery, 1853-1864; 1882-1886.
Wisconsin State Rights, 1861
The Wisconsin Lumberman, 1863-1866.
The Stevens Point Journal (Weekly) 1873-1920.
The Portage County Gazette, 1878-1923.
The Rosholt Review, 1920-1924.
The Rosholt Community Press, 1925-1930.
The Almond Press, 1924-1931.
The Amherst Advocate, 1893-1960.
The Stevens Point Daily Journal, 1896-1897;
1909-1952.

A complete list of Portage County newspapers and where they may be consulted is in preparation.

PUBLICITY FORUM...

The Stevens Point Jaycettes sponsored a publicity forum on Feb. 23, 1970 for Portage County groups. Professionals from local media, the state university, public relations and other business firms led in panel presentation and discussion. Representatives of the Portage County Historical Society attended: Clifford Swanson, Dorothy Vetter, Marjorie Warner.

SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

15th ANNIVERSARY MEETING...

Dr. Leland C. Pomainville, of the South Wood County Historical Society has informally issued an invitation to our membership to come to the South Wood County Society 15th Anniversary Meeting which will be held on Saturday, May 16 at 12:00 noon luncheon at the Bull Eye Country Club. The program will be on logging and rafting with over 52 slides to illustrate. Dr. Pomainville says that more information will be sent later.

A PRIVATE JOURNAL OF AN 1860 SETTLER
AND SCHOOL TEACHER...

We are much indebted to Dr. Pomainville of the South Wood County Society for sending portions of a journal written in the year 1850 by a school teacher in this area. It was given to him by a patient distantly related to the author.

The journal is fragmentary. Very possibly the hardships of frontier life account for this. The few entries given here give a first-hand picture of pioneer life in Wisconsin. More of this journal will be printed in later issues of The Pinery. [Dr. Pomainville has given permission to do this]

"How lazy and careless I am getting to be about writing down an account of the scenes that are constantly transpiring in this western world. Had I taken pains to keep an accurate account of my life and doings here it would greatly improve my style of composition if it did not serve as a passtime in old age if I should live

to be old. (Improving the mind) But where one is hard at work all the day it is difficult to bring the mind to anything that tends to improve or adorn it. If a portion of our time could be spent in cultivating the immortal part of ourselves, how much better it would be for us.

"Money goes - I spent nearly all my money so that I have not a dollar left. I was obliged to come home afoot and as the weather was not it about used me up. Friday as I was not fit for anything at home, I took a tramp over to the Little Prairie, to see the land and look out a road to Plover Portage a small village on the Wis. river, about 18 or 20 miles from us. This land was surveyed by the government into a town for the accomodation of the lumbermen, who are doing a very extensive business. Flour is selling for 5¢ per lb. at P.P. We got home Saturday noon since which I have felt rather poorly.

"I commenced my winters work in Eldorado and a winters work it will be too. Such a school I never before undertook to teach. The school is very backward, and order and discipline are entirely unknown. But my business is to reduce this confused state of things to order and harmony. I have been trying it now a week, and the most difficulty that I anticipate is from irregular attendance and tradiness."

JUDGE GEORGE W. CATE'S GRANDSON...

The society has received (through Mrs. Rothman) clippings, photographs, records and family mementos from Mr. Garth Cate, Tryon, N. C. Mr. Cate's grandfathers Judge George W. Cate and Matthew Wadleigh were, as we know, honored and influential leaders in the pioneer and early life of the county.

Mr. Cate has written several engaging and informative reminiscing letters:

To Edith Rothman he wrote: "...I recall pleasantly calling with my mother at your childhood home on Division, not far from the Agnew-Pray house. Your mother always

made me feel so welcome. It was a cozy, comfortable, interestingly furnished home..."

In another: "...I take my professional cap off to Judge Cate for his lively defense of the name 'Stevens Point' when 'Plato' threatened it. It has a light touch that is charming and I wish more of that could have softened the dour New England traditions that governed most of his human relations..." Judge Cate's "Plato" essay, as we know, is a Stevens Point little classic.

In acknowledging your president's letter expressing the society's appreciation for his gift, Mr. Cate replied: "...your good letter, with the many fascinating and informative enclosures made me feel that you were an old friend of mine and the two pioneer families I belong to. This letter would be miles long were I to relate the score of incidents that I recalled when reading the old newspaper accounts. How fortunate I was in my grandparents, and what big and little tragedies befell their children. I owe much to those two strong forthright, independent men..."

Mr. Cate refers here to his "other" grandfather, Matthew Wadleigh, of whom a photo was included with the mementos sent. Not the least of the tragedies referred to by Mr. Cate as "inter-family concussions" was the well-known Morse-Hazeltine shootings of the 1880's. Judge Cate defended the Currans after the shooting of Hazeltine; to add to the inter-play of tragedy, Mrs. Eva Wadleigh Hazeltine was a sister of Garth Cate's mother. As Stevens Pointers know, this tragedy has taken the quality of a folk legend that still broods over the city.

Garth Cate lives in North Carolina in the Great Smokies and in his octogenarian years continues as a great defender of this beautiful region against the ravages of commercialism and pollution. In October 1969 Mr. Cate was awarded the "Connie" award at the 14th annual convention of the Society of American Travel Writers held at Las Vegas. He wrote of himself in this conservation role:

"That my grandfathers were both lumbermen in the Wisconsin pinery in the 1850's does not mean that I was a birthright conservationist. Far from it. It was not until 1911 when I heard Theodore Roosevelt speak at the dedication of his dam out in Arizona that the seeds of my future were planted.

I wound up my 50 years of newspapering in 1949 as Travel and Trade Director for Scripps-Howard Newspapers. From Scripps-Howard's Conservation Editor, the late Edward J. Meeman, I learned much. I came to see that our great resorts whose very existence was so dependent on fresh air, pure water, healthy forests, abundant wildlife and beautiful scenery were doing little or nothing to protect and develop those vital natural resources..."

GEORGE WASHINGTON CATE...

Garth Cate's grandfathers, George W. Cate and Matthew Wadleigh, are pioneers whose roots were in the lumber mills of the 1840's and 1850's on the Plover and Little Eau Claire rivers. Mr. Wadleigh was to become a well known mill owner; Mr. Cate because of his legal training gained prominence in public life.

George W. Cate's parents were well-to-do Vermont farmers. At age 17 he started in a Montpelier, Vt. law office, being admitted to the bar there in 1844. He came to Wisconsin in that same year.

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A correspondent tells of the friendship of George Cate with Judge Clarke of Wausau; "although Cate was older than Clarke; a friendship was formed upon the trip--they reached Stevens Point the day before the general election of 1844. For several years they worked at the Brawley Mill, Clarke cooking and Cate working at the mill in the summer and driving oxen in the winter. Mr. Clarke pays Mr. Cate a high tribute: he was the only man he ever met in those early days who showed enough interest in him to take him to one side and quietly counsel him to... always aspire to the best his surroundings

afforded and though more than half a century has since elapsed, the words of that splendid young Vermonter still ring in the ears of him who was then a wild and impulsive boy."

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In 1848, Mr. Cate located in Plover and engaged in the practice of law at this legal center of the district, joining James S. Alban, the only other attorney in the area.

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In the years just prior to the establishment of a Normal at Stevens Point, Judge Cate was a Normal School Regent. Attorney Byron B. Park's name (later Judge Cate's law partner) overshadowed the name of Cate in the climactic, dramatic political role he took in the legislative enactment, but it was Judge Cate's written address to the committee of visitors justifying the selection of Stevens Point for the sixth Normal School in the state that is the landmark document for this institution.

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MRS. BOSS' PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY...

At an Amherst meeting in November, Mrs. Alice Loberg (Now of Nelsonville) told us of her grandmother, Theodora (Mrs. Thomas) Boss and her 19th century photograph gallery in Amherst, showing us examples of her art.

Mrs. Boss' portrait photographs show real warmth of personality and character in her subjects, something that was difficult to reach in the stiffness of early photographic paraphernalia. This warmth must have been a reflection of the photographer's own personality and freedom of spirit, something of which is apparent in the following account of her by Mrs. Loberg:

Mrs. Thomas (Theodora) Boss was born Dec. 12, 1843, in New York state near Ithaca in the Finger Lakes region, a daughter of John Morrison and Mary Godfrey. Her grandfather, Seth Godfrey was a soldier of the Revolutionary War from April 1775 to July 1780. A descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullens, who came over on the Mayflower.

There were four children in the Morrison family; two sons, Ephraim and Rolla, and two daughters, Anna and Theodora. Ephraim and Anna died when they were young. Rolla and Theodora came to Wisconsin, it is not known why. Rolla was badly injured in the Civil War. He never fully recovered from his wounds, although he homesteaded for a time near Minot, North Dakota. He was forced to return to Wisconsin and after a leg amputation at the home of his niece, Mrs. Casper Smith, he died in 1907, at the farm.

Theodora was married when she was 24 years old to Thomas Boss, a carpenter, in December 1867. They had five children: Alice (Mrs. Smith) Caroline (Mrs. George Peterson), Rachel, (Mrs. William Peterson) and two sons who died in infancy.

It is not known what event initiated the profession of photography in her life, but she needed to provide a livelihood for her three daughters. She was sharp and resourceful, photography was a fairly new vocation, perhaps that is why it appealed to her.

Her gallery and home stood where the library is now located, near the Tomorrow River on Mill St. It was then a marshy area and the house was built on stilts and always had cold, drafty floors.

Using the wet plate process, the negatives, which were glass, had to be washed and washed in cold water in a big tin sink. Then they were placed in frames and exposed until done, in the sunshine; if there was no sunshine, there was no developing. After this the prints were placed in two solutions and rinsed and rinsed and rinsed after each solution. There was no stove in her workroom, which was at the front of the building, and she would need to come in to the living quarters often to warm her hands near the stove before returning to her work.

It was relatively easy to identify a Boss photograph. Working with a limited amount of settings, the backgrounds were always familiar. She especially liked photographing children, taking a lot of time with them to obtain a satisfactory pose.

She wore her white hair bobbed, at a time when all women wore long hair. She was uninterested in women's style of dress and wore her hair bobbed for convenience, because of having to cover her head with a black shawl for taking pictures.

She read Carlyle, Emerson and the Bible, and was well posted on events of the time. She was a LaFollette fan, Bryan too, Norris and TVA. She detested Teddy Roosevelt and his "big stick and bloody shirt". She had no time for war mongers saying that "as long as they make munitions, there will always be a use for them." She believed none of the Mexican, German and Japanese perils, which was a typical mid-western attitude at that time.

Besides reading and earning a living in photography, she was fond of embroidering and did bead work. She knew a lot about herbs and their medicinal value, and was often asked for advice in time of illness. She was more aware of the contagion of germs and bacteria than the physicians in the area. How she acquired this knowledge is not known; she must have had access to reading material and certainly had an active mind to think through and retain what she had read. When she retired from her career, she lived with her daughter Alice, on a farm west of Amherst, until her death in 1918.

PHOTOGRAPHS and SNAPSHOTS...

We are very much interested in securing photos, formal and informal, of Portage County personalities and places. Mrs. Loberg has offered examples of Grandma Boss' work for reproduction by the Society.

We are also much interested in the work of other Portage county galleries. Please look through your albums for photos. Present them to the Society for safe-keeping, for recording or for reproduction. Watch for early Portage County photographic imprints.

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Mrs. Edward Wells (now residing in ^{Algoma} ~~Kewaunee~~) sends news of a sister society:

THE KEWAUNEE COUNTY JAIL-MUSEUM...

The Kewaunee County Historical Society won its advisory referendum on Tuesday, Apr. 15, to save the county's abandoned 90-year old red-brick jail on the city of Kewaunee's courthouse square.

The county board of supervisors was very skeptical. In fact, by August 1969 the proposal seemed dead after the board cast a 12-7 vote to advertise bids for demolition. George Villiers, president of the small society once again opened campaigns and secured the privilege of referendum. The final vote, 2773 for, 955 opposed.

The society will pay for remodelling, staff and maintenance; the county donating the \$1000 anticipated razing costs. The society membership expanded from a small group to over 600 members during the last year.

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THE PINERY is issued by the PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Members of the Board are:

Guy Gibson, Winifred Harvey, C. W. Nason, Mrs. Win. Rothman
Clifford Swanson, Hamilton Viets, M.J. Willett, Marjorie
Warner, James Pfiffner. Nelis R. Kampenga, President;
Marie Swallow, Vice-President; Alice Gordon, Secretary;
Mrs. Dorothy Kampenga, Treasurer.

Address correspondence to: N. R. Kampenga, Route 1, Box 55
Stevens Point, Wis. 54481

REMEMBER THE ANNUAL MEETING -- Thursday, April 23, 1970, 7:30 p.m. -- SENTRY AUDITORIUM