



The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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GENERAL MEETING

A general meeting of the Portage County Historical Society will be held on Wednesday evening, Nov. 18, at 7:30 p.m.*

The program will feature John H. Moore of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, as speaker. Mr. Moore directed archaeological digs near Nelsonville during the summers of 1969 & 1970. He was assisted by students from the University and has accumulated evidence that pre-historic man lived here nearly 2000 years ago. Mr. Moore will illustrate this talk with slides.

About 12,000 years ago the glacier which came down over this part of Wisconsin stopped a few miles west of the mound on which Mr. Moore and his students have been working. In their first summer's dig they unearthed artifacts dating to the late woodland or historic period a few centuries after the birth of Christ.

Mr. Moore learned about the mounds in Central Wisconsin when he read an article on the work of University of Wisconsin archaeologists here nearly 60 years ago. He is the second professor from the local university to direct a scientific dig in this area. Members of the society will recall that Mr. George I. Dixon of WSU-Stevens Point spoke to the society a number of years ago on his work at a site near Plover.

Bring your friends to this general session and tell other friends of the society they are welcome.

* see note on page 4.

JORDAN REGISTERED MARKER

The legend for the Jordan marker, after many revisions, has now been approved by the Board of Directors of the Portage County Historical Society and by the County Park Board and will soon be on the way to the sign manufacturer. The funds for the marker are being provided by the Portage County Board of Supervisors.

A PIONEER PARK MARKER

Mr. & Mrs. Win Rothman will sponsor a marker to record a tribute to early pioneers of Stevens Point; it is to be placed on the bank of the Wisconsin River at the foot of Main Street. A committee is working with the Rothmans on the feasibility, location and the legend of this marker. Members of the committee are: Adam Bartosz, Carl Jacobs, Margaret Love, Had Manske, James Pfiffner, Mrs. Ray Specht, Mrs. H.R. Steiner, Dorothy Vetter, Marjorie Warner, K.B. Willett. Guy Gibson is chairman.

OUR COUNTY, OUR STORY

The County Board of Supervisors has now released its supply of *Our County, Our Story, Portage County, Wisconsin* for sale at \$3.50 (list \$5.00). This book you will recall was written by Malcolm Rosholt when he was President of our Society. It was published by the County Board of Supervisors in 1959. Mr. Rosholt received a State Historical Society of Wisconsin Award of Merit in 1960 for its authorship. The volume was hailed as the only county history to be published in the state in 40 years, "a monumental, 600 page contribution to local history which in its scholarship,

literary charm and encyclopedic coverage serves to set a new standard for Wisconsin and county histories."

Now this book is available to you for \$3.50. There is no question that this book is the indispensable handy home reference to Portage County history.

1971 CALENDARS and FIRST SCHOOL-HOUSE NOTEPAPER

The 1971 Wisconsin calendars are available at \$1.25 per copy, packaged for mailing. They may be obtained at the Stevens Point Public Library, the Wisconsin State University Center Book-Store, or from N.R.Kampenga, President of the Society. They will also be available at the general meeting. They make nice Christmas remembrances when you want to send a little more than a greeting.

Boxes of the Society's First School House note-paper, with Mildred Davis' sketch of the school-house, are still available at \$1.00 each.

HISTORY MOBILE SCHEDULE in PORTAGE COUNTY

The State Historical Society History-mobile will be in Portage County, in November and December:

- Amherst. Nov. 23
- Rosholt. Nov. 25
- Stevens Point, Nov. 30-Dec.7

ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY-- REGIONAL MEETING and ANNUAL INSTITUTE

The North Central Regional Division held its annual meeting at Minocqua at the Minocqua Country Club, Aug. 22. This was an excellent meeting, featuring a talk by Robert Bernstein, Engineering Technician, State Highway Department. Mr. Bernstein is using his professional talents and fine sense of history in exceptional

historical map-making, developing a series of beautifully drawn maps to delineate the trails, waterways, stops, villages and settlements of the voyageurs, Indians and pioneers in early Northern Wisconsin. The maps were displayed.

The 21st annual Institute for Local History and the 9th annual meeting of the Wisconsin Council for Local History met in Madison Oct. 9-10. The annual awards are the main feature of the institute. The major award, the Reuben Gold Thwaites Trophy went to the Dunn County Historical Society chiefly for the large part it played in establishing a county park named for Caddie Woodlawn, the Wisconsin frontier girl who is the heroine of Carol Ryrle Brink's 1935 Newbery Award winning book. The Dunn County Society with 70 members, organized in 1951 has developed a very ambitious program in the Woodlawn Park and in many other projects. There is a good review of this program and of the background for other recipients of awards in *Wisconsin Then and Now*, Nov. 1970.

Nelis and Dorothy Kampenga represented our society at Minocqua and at the Madison meeting.

...YOUNG MEN GONE

A poignant letter in the Portage County Historical Society files from a young Civil War soldier has so much pertinence to the time and the coming season that we present portions of it here. The letter is a facsimile copy of an original in the possession of Carl Westbrook of Haefford Junction, Wis., who brought it to the attention of Clifford Swanson. The letter, dated Feb. 5, 1863 at Helena, Arkansas by Abe Westbrook, 9th Ill. Cavalry began:

"Aunt Nancy-- I received your letter but a few moments ago - have just finished reading it. Aunt, allow me to call you so, for I used to when a boy and I want to bring myself back in memory as near as I can to those days. I never received a letter that gave me greater pleasure than yours did: it brought home friends and my boyhood associations so

vividly to my mind it gave me joy to think that I am not forgotten by those from whom I have been separated so long.

"You commenced by wishing me a happy New Year! Thank you. I will tell you how I was engaged that day and then you can judge for yourself whether it was a happy New Year or not. I will speak of both Christmas and New Year. Christmas I spent in search of a band of guerrillas, riding all day in the rain, and at night instead of meeting with friends in some cheerful room, perhaps to pass away the evening by singing or some other pleasant amusement I had to wrap my solitary blanket around me, throw myself down on the damp ground to pass the night as best I could. New Year I spent in my lonely tent a shaking victim to the ague and fever. These were the enjoyments I had for the holidays.

"You spoke of the day as being a solemn one to you, that it brought up the memories of the past and that you had lost another neighbor. I well know what feelings this causes in neighborhoods where death does not call so often. You spoke about my becoming accustomed to it! In one sense I have. And yet, I have not. I hope I will never become so heartless but what I will have sympathy for those who suffer and will look upon death with due solemnity. A soldier can be brave in battle and still have humane feelings. I will admit that in battle when a persons bad nature is aroused, when he thinks of avenging a fellow comrade he will take a man's life and even feel a sort of a hellish pleasure in the suffering of his enemy. I can call it by no more gentle name; I know I have myself at times delighted in human misery. Yes, I have seen the time when my comrades were falling round me had it been in my power, I would have dyed my sabre in the blood of at least a thousand and then would not have felt satisfied. At such times, death has no terror, it is all swallowed up in passion, but let that excitement pass away and the demon again becomes a man; humanity returns- that enemy that possibly he has wounded so dangerously and would delight in killing at the time his passions were aroused, has now fallen in his hands; he sees his suffer-

ings and all malice is gone. He binds up his wounds and talks with him pleasantly, as though they had always been friends. Let a man sicken and die by disease and death never will lose its solemnity with me.

"...we are fast approaching the time when another great battle is to be fought at Vicksburg. The bloodiest battle of the war--the battle that will decide the destiny of our nation. If we are victorious, the union will be safe, if not it will be lost. The battle I think will be fought sometime this month...I suppose we will be there to take a part and if I survive that battle I am going home..."

Our soldier (if indeed he did survive) was to see some of the bloodiest of warfare before July 4, 1863 (five months later) when Vicksburg finally fell.

VOTES IN PORTAGE COUNTY

In college year 1952-53 a seminar course under Dr. Warren E. Jenkins undertook a study of trends in voting in Portage County. Much data was brought together, the results of elections were tabulated, graphs drawn, for years 1908-1952. Chiefly, the data showed that Portage County was predominantly Republican from 1908 to 1936, Democrat from 1936-1952. Names of those elected for all these years, age, nationality, church affiliation, occupation are charted. Some conclusions were drawn by the class but all agreed more and sharper data was required.

The same year, student Gene R. Anderson attempted carrying the Portage County data back into the 19th century with his compilation *Portage County Chooses, a Record of Portage County Voting, 1876-1952*.

Much data is here for a socio-political study of Portage County. It needs to be extended and brought to date.

Copies of the studies are available at the Portage County Historical Society.

DAVID C. BAILEY...

In the November 1969 issue, under "A View of Stevens Point in 1854" we presented a revealing letter of an early Stevens Point resident, David C. Bailey, a finding of our good friend Dennis R. Bodem, State Archivist of Michigan, in the Potter-Crosby letters, a manuscript collection of that state.

In it, our young carpenter spoke admiringly of the boat pilots running lumber down river, "...and wages on the river is \$1.25 to \$2.00 per day and pilots get from \$3 to \$5 per day..."

David did get to be a pilot, *Our County, Our Story* notes this on p. 502, where his name appears in a list of river pilots.

We look forward to uncovering more facts.

PLACE NAMES...

Neighboring County place names are almost as much a part of our folk-life as Portage names. You will be interested in a 1970 University of Wisconsin publication, *Wood County Place Names* by Robert S. Rudolph. (list \$3.95).

REMEMBER THE GENERAL MEETING -- WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18, 1970, 7:30 p.m.

We are meeting in the converted Old University Library Building, now called the Student Service Center, on Fremont Street, room 104.

The room is on the north side of the building and may be entered from the Fremont Street entrance or through the rear entrance on the Student Union Building side.

We would have preferred a down-town meeting place but the Demonstration room at the County-City Building and the Public Library and Sentry auditoriums were in use this night.

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

Guy Gibson, Winifred Harvey, Had Manske, C. W. Nason, James Pfiffner, Clifford Swanson, Dorothy Vetter, Hamilton Viets, M. J. Willett, Marjorie Warner.

Nelis R. Kampenga, President; Marie Swallow, Vice President; Alice Gordon, Secretary; Dorothy Kampenga, Treasurer.