



The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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ANNUAL MEETING...

The society's annual meeting this year will be held April 25, Wed. Evening, 7:30 p.m., in the auditorium room of the UW/SP COPS (College of Professional Studies) building. This is the same room in which the society held its last general meeting.

Wendell Nelson, member of our society and instructor in the UW/SP English department, drawing from materials developed for his course Home Heritage in Central Wisconsin, will present a slide-lecture. Mr. Nelson will emphasize for us certain Portage County landmark residences, paying particular regard to the stories of the people and families who lived in them.

ANNUAL DUES...

April 1 marks the beginning of a new year for the Portage County Historical Society, with annual dues for the coming year payable then. Make payment of dues to the acting treasurer of the society: Carolyn R. Sargis, Park Ridge, Stevens Point, Wis., 54481.

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CONVENTION of the WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR LOCAL HISTORY, which is to be entertained this year by the Portage County Historical Society is slated for Saturday Sept, 29, 1973. A committee is setting plans for this event.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL (1973) CONFERENCE IN STEVENS POINT...

The state society is holding its 127th annual meeting at the Holiday Inn, June 14-16. The program will be announced soon.

JORDAN PARK HISTORICAL MARKER

Now that federal funds have been assured for developing the park grounds, plans are being set for summer placement and dedication of the society's registered marker for this historic site.

WIN & EDITH ROTHMAN...

The society has a very special attractive print (color) of Win & Edith Rothman and the Gateway to the Pineries marker. It was taken on the dedication day by Clayton McIlarkey, who photographed and developed this very becoming photo. It will be sent to you upon request (at cost).

EVA PIERCE...

The society acquired as nice a collection of the turn-of-the-century photos as one could wish from Eva Pierce, Plover. She presented some 80 glass negatives which have been developed into excellent views of Plover village. An exhibit of these is planned for the annual meeting.

VICTOR F. SHULFER & OTHERS OF ARNOTT

Thanks to the efforts of our member Sharron Zimmerman, the society has gained photos of people and places in and around Arnott. Chief among these reproductions are those taken from the glass plate negative collection of Victor F. Shulfer.

SOME PLOVER ITEMS...

One of the pleasures of your president for the past eight years was that of serving as a member of the Town of Plover Plan Commission, currently of the Village of Plover Commission. As secretary of these hard-working commissions, it's been a cognate interest and part of the fun to fill any left-over spaces in the

typed proceedings with historical notes on Plover, Springville and adjoining areas. The potato being a major fact of Plover's existence, the note frequently concerned the spud. Some of these are passed on to you here:

Early Potatoes: "Peter Lemieux is credited with growing the first potatoes in the north country. This pioneer arrived at Plover on the 5th day of October 1847. Simon Augustus Sherman in his Notebook records: "When he came there was no farming done in the country; all supplies were brought from Illinois and Southern Wisconsin and well does he remember the first potatoes grown north of Stevens Point, which he planted and how anxious he watched their growth and when they were about as large as his thumb, dug out a few, killing a porcupine...he made into a soup and what a delicious feast he had out of it."

An anti-pesticide note. From the Portage County Gazette, July 17, 1878: "...The seasonable rains have prevented the chintz bugs from doing much damage, but the potato bug exists in all his glory, where he remains unchecked by paris green or some other contrivance. Many persons believe that the free use of paris green is about as injurious to the potato as to the bug. John Een of Amherst, tells us he has invented a machine for picking potato bugs, which enables a man to pick two rows as fast as he can walk through them. The machine is constructed on the wheelbarrow principle, with fans on each side to brush the bugs into a trough. One man can bug two acres in two hours."

PETER LEMIEUX...

The above Plover item on this pioneer has this happy conjunction: a letter from Mark H. Bruce of Evansville, Wis., dated April 9, 1973: "I will be attending the Wisconsin Theatre Cooperative" writes Mr. Bruce, "this weekend, April 13-15. I will be staying at the Hotel Whiting...I will be bringing all of the items relating to the Bruce and Lemieux families, so if someone will contact me...we can go over the items and pick out what you want."

GEORGE STERLING...

Recently retired from postmastership at Plover after 23 years of service. For years he made it his civic interest to beautify Plover with the handsomest decorated Christmas tree on Post Road. Lesser known is the fact of his Portage County ancestry. George Sterling is the namesake of one of the pioneers in Simon Augustus Sherman's Notebooks. We quote:

"George Sterling was born in the town of Lombard, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, in 1812. He came to Plover in Spring 1849; saw Bean & Mitchell, made a claim, afterwards bought it and has lived there ever since. His wife's maiden name was Mary Somerson and came from the same place. He had three children when he came--John, James and Elizabeth. He was a farmer and killed the first lynx I ever saw in the swamp below the Yellow Banks with his dog and axe in the winter of 1849. He is now alive in 1901, is a liberal in sentiment, a good man and much respected."

THE PINERY is issued by the PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Stevens Point.

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.

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Address all correspondence to N.R.Kampenga, 301 Post Road, Plover, Wis., 54481

GATEWAY TO THE PINERY:
CARL JACOBS' ELOQUENT
DEDICATORY WORDS.

Mr. Chairman, Edith & Win Rothman, Mayor Borham, Ladies & Gentlemen:

Greetings to all who braved a November 15 dedication in Wisconsin weather. There has to be a little of the pioneer in you, too! Because in my age group we have already faced a lot of that weather, this talk therefore will be brief and to the point.

Officially we're gathered here to dedicate a registered state marker to mark this small area which was the gateway to the great pineries of the upper Wisconsin River...

This marker is the generous gift of Edith & Win Rothman of this city, both of them descendants of families which played a leading role in the early events and times of this place. The emplacement costs have been assumed by other individuals. And speaking for all of us, we are grateful for the preparatory work of the Portage County Historical Society to secure state approval and registration of this marker.

When the local society asked me to help dedicate this marker they put no restrictions on my remarks. So I want to point out that in marking this area we are also remembering the really hardy people who worked and lived here when this was truly "The Gateway to the Pineries." Any American just has to be of different nature from the average person in the land from which his forefathers came. Because we are all descended from the people who were bold and venturesome enough to set out for a strange continent.

But those early pioneers in this area were especially rugged--they had to be. So let us remember this marker marks their memory too. And most of them worked or passed through the place we're standing on now. One hundred years ago this very spot was in the midst of great activity at any season. In the fall, supplies were being readied and shipped up river for the winter. Steamers took much of it as far as present Mosinee. In the spring, the great log drives were coming down to the old Boom House where they were sorted and directed to the many mills which surrounded this spot. And all the year those mills were sawing the rough lumber for the giant rafts which every spring and early summer would take it down to the Mississippi River to build the farmhouses, towns and cities of the bustling prairie states. So, you see this really was a tremendous gateway up which poured lumbermen and supplies and from which came the white pine logs. From this gateway pouring south went the processed lumber to build the mid-west states.

As a boy I can remember the final stages of the lumber era. The log sorting booms were still in place and still used. Several mills still remain, one on this very spot.

I hope that this marker through the years ahead will be useful and informative to the tourists who pass here. To the townspeople who live in a different modern world, I hope it recalls for them the heritage of the great pinery gateway which first built Stevens Point. So again, I say thanks to the Rothmans and to the Portage County Historical Society who made this marker possible. And thanks to all of you who are helping dedicate this monument.

GATEWAY TO THE PINERIES AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE INDIAN LAND.

We present in this issue full excerpts from Malcolm Rosholt's address to the society which was given on the dedication day (Nov.15) of the Win & Edith Rothman marker in Pioneer Park.

Mr. Rosholt's words are worth preserving and make good re-reading. In it the meaning of "pinery" as language, geography and history is developed. In the next issue of The Pinery will be presented a portion of the address dealing with a little explored relationship the impact of this incursion

on the "Indian Lands." This is a significant statement on a timely topic and Malcolm Rosholt's research, analysis and exposition on it should have everyone's attention.

We want this writing printed in The Pinery. Meanwhile, if you would like a copy of the full address mailed to you, write or phone this office: University Archives, Univ. of Wisconsin, Stevens Point; phone 346-2586. A voice record is also available on tape at cost.

"...We are all committed to the past as much as to the present. In our effort to understand the present we want to learn how an earlier generation attempted to meet its problems. We are also fascinated with the sufferings of past men and women, of the ordeal at Andersonville, the cruelty and callousness and yet the redeeming grace of humanity exhibited by a Southern neighbor. New studies are still being made of the trial of Sacco & Vanzetti because our conscience is not clear and we wonder whether there was a miscarriage of justice. We study the split in North New Hope Church here in Portage County nearly a century ago and try to understand why it happened and why there are three churches of the same denomination less than four miles apart.

"Meanwhile, we have time to look at old portraits of the pioneers to this county, of the men who worked in the logging woods and on the river drives, and of the women who kept the fire burning at home while their men were away. In some portraits, better preserved than others, the faces of these people come through to us clearly, even forcefully, and they tell us that the men and women who settled this county were proud of their role as pioneers. There are suggestions of vanity, but also of strength. Many of the women in these portraits are fair to behold and in this beauty some strange force assails us because it seems hard to believe that these women, a long time ago, were brimming with life and love and that men were attracted to them. We look at their clothing and at their hats and their hair-dos, and find in these arrangements a connective link with the present. As a result, the gap between the past and the present does not seem to be so wide anymore and this makes us feel more secure. We are somehow related, and because we can identify with these people in the old portraits we are also identifying ourselves with still other men and women going back into antiquity.

"From our renewed interest in genealogy, is it possible that we are seeking a new status symbol? I do not think so. I have long known of the inordinate pride some people take in claiming even the remotest relationship to the Mayflower, or the First Families of Virginia, but these people are, I believe, now in the minority. The vast number of genealogists are descendants of the new Americans who inundated our port facilities in the 1800s down to World War I, most of them now third and fourth generation men and women who want to know as much as possible about the juices that flow through their roots. Most of them are anxious to pass this information on to their children, and in doing so they are also giving them a sense of unity with the past, something to hold on to as it were, and the knowledge that their parents and grandparents were through the ups and downs of life, felt the ironies and disappointments but also the moments of happiness and limited moments of success. They want to tell their children that life is precious.

"In erecting a marker at the Gateway to the Pineries, Mr. & Mrs. Win Rothman of Stevens Point are telling us something about the past which is precious to them as it should be to us. They are telling us to pause and think of the thousands of men and women who came here to challenge the wilderness frontier of Wisconsin more than a century ago, coming here in covered wagons behind oxen driven up from Belvidere and Gills Landing, walking on foot along the gig paths at the Wisconsin river from Portage to Plover, or riding in stage coaches from Berlin to Moore Barn, all intent on making a new start in life, confident of a new era in the human condition.

"But it is fair to assume that many of the pioneers barely managed to survive these first decades. Some stayed a few years and were forced to move on, farther west perhaps where there were no debts, or they returned to their place of beginning. However, their

places here were taken by others and the tide of emigration into the Wisconsin River valley continued, for here a new species of gold had been found--the white pine--a nugget that often stood more than a hundred feet in the air, six feet on the stump, and straight as a candle. And here was also the red pine, and the hemlock and the tamarack and the cedar and the birch and basswood, for nowhere else in the world, apparently, was there such a rich mixture of timber in such a limited area, and nowhere were the colors as resplendent in autumn probably as right here in Stevens Point at the Gateway to the Pineries.

"As far as I know, no other section in the United States ever came to be called 'The Pinery.' There were pineries in other states, no doubt, merely from the fact that any grove of pine trees can be called a pinery, but here, in the northern half of Wisconsin, the potential for harvesting pine timber was so great that the region came to be called 'The Pinery' and when Albert Ellis moved here from Green Bay to open a land office in 1853, he soon left government service to start a weekly newspaper which he called 'The Pinery'.

"The Milwaukee Sentinel on September 18, 1852 carried an article on the lands in northern Wisconsin acquired from the Menominee Indians by the government under the Treaty of Lake Poygan in 1848. 'In the Northern part of this tract,' the Sentinel relates, 'are large and extensive pineries extending for miles beyond the headwaters of the Wolf.' The Sentinel which was not entirely certain of its geography--and no blame need be attached--in a later paragraph said that a large river, meaning the Wisconsin, was navigable two hundred miles and extended north 'into the very heart of the pinery.' And this is correct. The pine belt in Wisconsin a century ago lay roughly north of present highway 54 from Black River Falls east through Plover and Waupaca and on to Green Bay via New London and Black Creek. North of this line our great river systems originate, the Wolf and the Embarrass, the Wisconsin and the Plover, the Little Eau Pleine and the Big Eau Pleine, the Eau Claire and the Rib, the Pelican and the Peshtigo, the mere mention of which brings to mind the millions of feet of logs that were cut and floated down these rivers to the sawmills, or the billions of feet of lumber that were floated down these rivers to markets in Wisconsin and Illinois and to the newly-rising cities and villages of Iowa and Missouri. Well might it be said that Wisconsin lumber built most of the houses and saloons in the Mississippi valley, and it is almost a certainty that the raft on which Huckleberry Finn and Jim sailed down the Mississippi came from stray logs which had broken their booms in Wisconsin and floated into the Mississippi where they became snagged on a deserted island frequented by two boys who became immortal.

"By definition, the western boundary of the pineries lay, by a coincidence, along the 4th principal meridian which runs from south to north through the state, skirting the city of Neillsville a few miles to the east. The rivers to the east of the 4th meridian run southeast into the Wisconsin and the rivers west of the meridian run southwest into the Mississippi. Here, then, is another great divide in Wisconsin caused by glacial phenomenon. Hence, to be more specific, I believe the pineries lay north of present highway 54 and east of the 4th principal meridian. But how far east and how far north? My own feeling is that it was meant to describe the Wisconsin river valley from Stevens Point north to Jenny Bull Falls, now Merrill, and west as far as Colby on the headwaters of the Big Eau Pleine, northwest to Rib Lake, and east of the Wisconsin river to the Plover.

"Exploitation of the timber along the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers came a generation later than in the Wisconsin valley, and the term itself, 'the pineries' was no longer in use. It probably passed out of the vernacular after the railroads came to this county in the early 1870's. After this, lumberjacks leaving for the woods to work simply said they were 'going into the woods.' Everyone understood that. It could be any kind of woods and any kind of tree cutting, mostly other than pine.

"But it was through Stevens Point that the great movement of lumberjacks and lumbermen passed a century ago. Here was the place to buy tobacco and 'snoose,' chains and axes, peavy poles and canthooks, mackinaws and boots, and from here most of the crews walked on foot or drove by team to their destination in the woods where they found work as cruisers, choppers, sawyers, scalers, teamsters, loaders, swamper, cooks and bull-cooks, and here there were boarding houses catering to ethnic groups and especially to the Scandinavians going into the woods from John Week on the Big Eau Pleine. And here at Stevens Point were big horse barns where the log jobbers bought and sold their horses and oxen, and here were saloons around the Public Square, one up against the other, where the jacks (after being in the woods all winter) could get gloriously drunk in spring before they returned to their homes. Stevens Point was not only the Gateway to the Pineries, for some men it was the gateway to hell!"