



The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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North Central Region Convention

The tenth annual convention of this region of the Wisconsin Council for Local History to which our society will be host is all set for Saturday, Sept.29. The program will be held in the Sentry auditorium, the luncheon in Hotel Whiting. Richard C. Schneider, Professor of Art at the UW-SP will present his talk with illustrations, on his efforts to construct a birch-bark canoe as the native Americans did it.

In the afternoon, attorney Maurice Rice will trace the folkways and pathways of the Voyageurs.

Programs and forms for reservations have been mailed to the societies in the region and to our membership.

The Jordan Dam & Power Plant

A major occasion of the year for the Portage County Historical Society will be the dedication of this historic site. From the beginnings much Portage County history focused at this place. Always an important river crossing and landmark we have long known it for its scenic and recreational pleasures.

The event will take place Sunday, Sept.16 at 4:00 p.m. Announcement and program was mailed to the membership last week. Malcolm Rosholt will give a brief talk on the historic significance of Jordan. Maurice Willett is in charge of arrangements. Hamilton Viets, chairman of the Jordan marker committee will be master of ceremonies.

This is as significant an occasion in Portage County park development as it is memorable to our society. The Portage

County Historical Society much appreciates the full support that the Park Commission has given this project and is grateful to the board of supervisors for furnishing the funds for its fulfillment.

For the record, we print the succinct story of Jordan, now cast in bronze as reminder to those who take pleasure in the past and like to consider in terms of history what the flow of these waters means.

JORDAN DAM and POWER PLANT

About 1840, near this site, Bloomer & Harper built one of the important early sawmills in Northern Wisconsin. It was long known as McGreer's Mill, named for an early owner. By 1890, over 700 million feet of lumber, much of it sawed here, was floated down river to the Wisconsin. From 1904 to 1965 the power plant, viewed across stream and built by the Stevens Point Power Co., pioneering the water diversion principle, produced auxiliary electricity for the Stevens Point area. When the land east of the river was platted in 1856, the settlement, known as Jordan, contained 40 buildings and 165 persons.

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Wild Rose Centennial.

The Wild Rose Historical Society is celebrating the 100th year of its village's birth. The final event will be a presentation by the society of an original play written by one of its members. The play will be given in the Wild Rose High School gymnasium September 20 & 21 at 8:00 p.m., admission \$1.00.

Our neighboring society extends a cordial invitation to our members to attend.

The Good-Old-Days Murals in the
Hotel Whiting Restaurant

The Gay Nineties and the last days of the great logging era are characterized and Stevens Point personalities caricatured on the walls of the Whiting Notor Hotel diningroom, formerly the bar-room. The colorful murals are the ambitious work of an artist-son of Stevens Point, E. John Pfiffner.

The four murals were painted in the spring of 1946, the artist doing the actual work over a period of six five-day weeks. A distinctive feature is the use of principles of perspective and the illusion of depth achieved. Largest of the murals, at the west end of the room, is "The Circle Two Step", a highly decorative painting that in color and design unites the other murals. "The Bar Room Brawl" and "The Bar Room Quartet", originally over the bar covers the north side of the room.

Stevens Point old-timers (more than a quarter of a century has passed since the painting) see familiar likenesses in the faces, notably, leaning against the bar in the brawl scene is E.J. Pfiffner, the artist's grandfather, and in the Circle Two Step dance, the fiddler is John Een of Amherst.

The artist now is a free-lance artist, living and working in the Chicago suburb of Mt. Prospect. Another work of Mr. Pfiffner in Stevens Point can be seen in the lobby of P.J. Jacobs High School. The stylized canvas mural in the new bar-room of the Whiting is a recent painting.

In 1958 the painting "The Log Jam" became an effective cover design for the Society's commemorative history brochure celebrating the Stevens Point centennial year.

Mr. Pfiffner is artist-illustrator consultant to the Field Museum of Natural History contributing greatly to the illustrations and publications work of that institution.

New Jordan, The Naming

Sarah A. Mason Green, wife of the pioneer Stevens Point merchant, George Washington Green, part owner (with his father-in-law) of the Mason & Wells mill at Jordan

is credited with naming the place after Jordan, N.Y., the home-place of the Greens and Masons.

Stevens Point Daily Journal's
100th Birthday

Sept. 13, 1973 marked the 100th year of publication of the Stevens Point Daily Journal (a weekly up to Oct. 23, 1895). There was an excellent historical piece on this in the Stevens Point Daily Journal on Sept. 13, 1973. It should be read carefully

The Portage County Historical Society particularly has great reason to appreciate the Journal. It has always supported the society, if we hearken just to the long membership and history-mindedness of former editor, James Hull.

We have long treasured the 1958 Centennial edition of the Journal as one of the finest examples of news collections of historical data, information and photos that we have ever seen.

Often and often the Journal carries features, photos and documents of historical intelligence of unestimable value--The Cutting Marsh diary for instance.

Too seldom do we consider that this weekly and daily repository of community and regional living is the core of research, study and memory in local history.

A Central Wisconsin Teacher, Her Recollections

We are fortunate to have the engaging writing of Mrs. James Shorey (ne Bessie Gibson), recalling at the age of 85 her school experiences in rural central Wisconsin. Mrs. Shorey died in 1970 at the age of 90; she is the mother of Mrs. Mary Samter, longtime faculty member at UW-SP.

"The schoolhouse where I went to school was in a wood area, in Adams County, a one-room building with home-made desks and kerosene lamps for light. An ungraded country school that taught from the primary to the 8th grade--reading, writing, spelling, ortheopy, geography, history, grammar.

"Being located in Wisconsin where the winters were quite severe, the room was heated by a wood burning heater standing in the center

of the room. In the front end of the room toward the road were two outside doors with a blackboard and teacher's desk between. Our seat-work was done with slates and pencils. On one side of the room the children's wraps were hung, dinner-pails lined up on a long bench with a space for the tin water pail and tin dipper. On the other side of the room was a space for class recitations, no wall decoration but a few maps.

"Most of the boys and some of the girls were always ready and anxious to go to the nearest farm for the drinking water. It always took two. The water was drawn from an open well, on my grandmother's farm, drawn by hand over hand with a rope and pulley attached to a large wooden bucket. When the water finally got to the school the pupils clamored to see who would have the pleasure of 'passing the water' which was done by each child taking his turn and all drinking from the same dipper.

"And the fun we had at recess--and the noon hour out on the playground--playing ball, pom-pom pull away and other games. We girls made play houses in the edge of the woods near the school house. We always hated to hear the bell calling us in from play; though it was a small hand-bell it sounded loud and imperative to us. I remember going allowed a few times to ring the bell for the teacher.

"My father's farm was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the schoolhouse. We had to walk that distance, and not being very strong I was not allowed to go to school until I was 7 years old, then only three months in the summer. The school schedule was 3 months: May, June, July in the summer and 3 months: Nov., Dec., January in the winter. I was about ten years

old before I was allowed to go to school in the winter. When I was about 13 or 14 the school board voted to add another month to the school term so February was added; by that time I was going regularly.

"At the age of 16 & 17 I attended teacher's summer school at Friendship, Wis; at 18 I took a county teacher's examination and received a certificate and taught one year in an ungraded country school.

"In the spring, when I was 19 years old, I married a school teacher. We moved to a farm in Waukesha county and raised six children and they all taught school at some time, and two are still teaching; and now I am 85 years old with many happy memories and very proud of my family but sometimes wishing I could have had more schooling."

The Wisconsin Calendar

The society will again supply the 1974 State Historical Society Wisconsin calendar. This year its cost is \$1.95. Availability of this calendar in super-markets and news stands has much reduced its sale value to the local society. This year we are supplying on consignment. We urge you to order them through the Portage County Historical Society.

A phone call or postcard to your president, N.R.Kampenga, 301 Post Road, Plover, phone 344-4308 or during the day at 346-2586, will bring one or any number of copies to you before the Christmas rush.

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

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