

The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April 1980

Stevens Point, WI. 54481 New Series Volume 4, No. 1

FOR THE RECORD

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the PCHS will be held on April 16 (Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m., in Room 119 of the Collins Classroom Center on the UW-SP campus. A large parking lot between Collins and the Fine Arts Building will be open for public use at that time. The room can be conveniently reached on the first floor of the Collins Center.

The featured speaker will be Patrick J. Maney who will discuss the influence of Robert LaFollette Jr., on Wisconsin and United States history and also offer insights into the preparation of his highly praised publication entitled "Young Bob" LaFollette: A Biography of Robert M. LaFollette Jr., 1895-1953 (University of Missouri Press, Columbia Missouri, 1978).

Mr. Maney is a former resident of Stevens Point and a UW-SP graduate. He received his Ph.D. in History at the University of Maryland in 1976 and is currently an administrative assistant in the Wisconsin Legislature.

A short business meeting is also planned and an announcement regarding the Rothman History Award. Copies of "Young Bob" LaFollette will be available for purchase at \$18. Society members and the general public are encouraged to attend.

FROM OUR READERS AND FRIENDS

Several persons responded to our request for additional information regarding a school class picture that appeared in the Stevens Point Journal on October 24th. The Society extends its appreciation to

Mrs. Dorothy Whitlock of North Carolina (formerly Dorothy Hamilton), Belva Nerlien, Iola, Wis., and E.F. Shippy, Stevens Point.

We also received an extended letter from the grandson of Count Sigismund Bielski regarding our article on Bielski in The Pinery (July 1979). Below is an extract:

January 4, 1980

In your article it stated that my grandfather had deserted his wife and TWO children in 1882 and returned to Poland. Actually there were THREE children, namely, my father (Richard Alfonso Bielski), my uncle (Walde Bielski) and my aunt (Alice Bielski), all of whom have now passed away.

We have very, very little information concerning our grand-father except the following: ostensibly his marriage to Anna M. Stenger, my grand-mother, in 1877 was pre-arranged by their respective parents; she was about 20 years younger than he. After the desertion she and their three children moved to Howard, South Dakota. My father was born in 1880. When he was about 17 years old (1896 or 1897) he told me that one day he went into the local bank in Howard, a small South Dakota town. He saw a very well-dressed, distinguished gentleman, but a total stranger. The bank clerk asked Dad if he knew who the stranger was and the reply was "No, I've never seen him before". The clerk then informed him that the stranger was his father. The two then met, with the moving words of

"My son, my son". Dad was as poor as a church mouse, but very impressionable at that age. His father promised him wealth, education and untold opportunities if he would return to New York with him. Dad was more than willing to go with him, but his mother, brother and sister objected so strenuously that he had to decline the offer. None of them ever heard of my grand-father after that. Maybe my grand-mother did, but during her lifetime she refused to tell her children (and later the grand-children) anything concerning her marriage to the Count. You now have the complete story, as we know it. Unless the Count returned to Poland after talking with my Dad (In 1896 or 1897) I would somehow doubt that he was shot and killed while attempting to escape from Siberia.

As a point of possible interest: In 1943, while serving in New York City as an F.B.I. agent, we had a matter concerning one "Prince Bielski". We learned that he was a phony; that he appropriated the name "Bielski" because it was a distinguished name in Poland and to it he added the word "Prince". I never followed through to learn anything further. In my travels through-out the world I have never come across a name spelled exactly like ours so it must be a rather unique one.

Richard M. Bielski
 2501 S. Kiwanis Ave
 Suite 309
 Sioux Falls, S. Dak. 57105

Readers with information on Count Bielski or the Bielski family should contact the PCHS and/or Mr. Bielski.

AND HE TOLD OFF-COLOR JOKES AS WELL

During this year of presidential primaries, nominations and evaluations of political candidates it is instructive to remember that the true measure of a person may not be revealed until the rhetoric subsides and an individual actually "takes office". Such was the case with Abraham Lincoln. Hardly beloved in the South, Lincoln was also viewed with disappointment and uncertainty in the North, especially among northern Democrats. Thus, G.L. Park, editor of the Stevens Point WISCONSIN PINERY wrote the following of the Republican presidential candidate in June 1860.

Mr. Lincoln has never furnished any

evidence that he is possessed of the qualifications of a statesman or executive--having held only one term in Congress, as representative from Illinois;--in fact it is true, that his course. . . there partook much more of the character of a factious partizan than of a statesman legislating for his country.--His votes against allowing our soldiers supplies when battling in the heart of Mexico, and his celebrated "spot" resolutions(which won him the name of Spot Lincoln,) rendered him so unpopular at home, that he subsided into private life, from which he was called in 1858 to contest the U.S. Senatorship against Douglas; Douglas beat him, and by that defeat Lincoln became famous.

A great effort will be made to get up a popular enthusiasm for Lincoln because he split rails once. It will fail.--Enthusiasm for a candidate because his life has been eventful, or eccentric, depends very much upon accident; and then people generally concede that to elect a man to a high office he should have ability, fitness and experience.--Lincoln lacks in that which inspires confidence in people, that the office, its functions, the national affairs, will be safe in his hands.

That Lincoln and Hamlin will be defeated we have little doubt; they cannot carry Indiana, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California or Oregon, against any candidate the Democracy may present.

WHAT.....NO ZIP CODE?

John Warren Hunt's Wisconsin Gazetteer (Madison, 1853) says of Plover:

Plover, P.V. (Post Village) & C.H. (Court House), on section 22, town 23 N., of range 8 E., in town of same name, in Portage County, being the county seat. It is 120 miles northwest of Madison. Population 200, with 35 dwellings, 2 stores, 2 hotels, 1 grist and 1 saw mill.

CLIO'S CORNER

BICYCLING....

Springtime and the current enthusiasm for bicycling (pedal powered) reminds the historical minded that it was in the 1890's that the bicycle as a means of transportation was at its height.

The ability to move at a 15 mile per hour speed was heady. In fact, nearly ninety years ago the faster set was already well organized into the Stevens Point Cycle Club, had built bicycle paths over much of the county, arranged race-tracks, and made long trips going as far east as Pennsylvania. A year later (1893) the Wheelmen Club drew up its constitution and held its first meeting at the Rink Opera House (popular place of entertainment on Strongs Avenue, pre-dating the present Fox Theatre Opera House on Main Street), adopting a cycling uniform of blue knee pants and cap, black stockings and belt and a light colored shirt.

The first officers of the Wheelmen Club were:

L.R. Anderson, President
 John Rothman, Vice President
 J.W. Holt, Secretary
 J.R. Congdon, Treasurer
 W. L. Bronson, Captain
 H.C. Craig, Lieutenant

The following is a list of other charter members:

Bosworth, F.E.	Schuweiler, N.
Butterfield, R.H.	Sherwin, G.C.
Cain, G.B.	Sizer, D.A.
Culver, A.J.	Slender, G.A.
Dillie, F.L.	Smith, Dr. Jesse
Ellertsen, J.C.	Spaulding, H.E.
Ellis, John F.	Strope, H.W.
Ennor, T.C.	Stumpf, E.O.
Gerhart, Geo.	Sustins, F.A.
Jones, C.L.	Sweetman, G.L.
King, F.Y.	Vaillancourt, C.L.
McDonald, W.S.	Virum, O.E.
Michael, Jos.	Week, A.R.
Mueller, W.C.	Welty, H.C.
Murray, F.H.	

Alex Wallace commented ("Stevens Point Through the Years," chapter 276, Stevens Point Daily Journal, Feb., 10, 1945) on the bicycle craze, noting that "unless one has passed through those frenzied bicycle days one cannot imagine the part

that the bicycle played 61 years ago. Bicycle paths were built all over our county and many through the state. Bicycle races were held all over the country. The bicycle had come, giving man the opportunity to travel faster than he had ever traveled before, except by train. The bicycle brought the pneumatic tire, the chain drive and later on the shaft drive, those inventions paving the way for making possible the automobile that followed."

On the Wheelmen Club, Alex Wallace noted further ("Stevens Point Through the Years", chapter 306, Stevens Point Daily Journal, March 17, 1945):

June 1, 1895. W. O. Lamoreaux and H.C. Welty returned Tuesday morning over the Central from a trip to Milwaukee on their bikes. They left for the Cream City last Saturday morning at 4:20 a.m., arriving at Ripon that evening. The next morning they proceeded on their 160 mile ride, arriving at the Kirby House in Milwaukee at 4:00 p.m. The distance between Ripon and Milwaukee via Fond du Lac, which is 84 miles, was covered in less than eight hours. To make the record an exceptionally good one Harry added 16 miles by taking a run out to Whitefish Bay and on his return to Milwaukee had covered 100 miles in just nine hours actual riding time. This record entitled him to wear the century bar and is the first century record ever made by a Stevens Point wheelman.

THE GOTHIC RECESS....

It is hard to imagine that elegance to any considerable degree existed in pioneer Portage County of the 1850's, but people of affluence and influence traveled to and through and resided in Stevens Point, so why not? Land was cheap and developing, and rich timber lands were close by. Perhaps it is not so surprising, therefore, to find the editor of the WISCONSIN PINERY singing the praises of "good food and drink" at an establishment with the entrancing name, the Gothic Recess.

It was a restaurant-saloon, opened just before Christmas of 1858 by L.D. Conery. On Feb. 19, 1859 it was the festive scene of a dinner for the PINERY staff. Early in April, Mrs. Conery opened a "ladies department" on the second floor, which by July was called "The Ladies Salon"...with a shade tree planted by the door."

In October 1859, Mr. Conery came back from the state fair in Milwaukee with "premium peaches, fresh oysters and delicacies." That its fame had spread seemed assured by a note in the CENTRAL WISCONSIN (Wausau) that it was a "very good establishment." In December 1860 the Gothic Recess boasted that "oysters could still be purchased by the plate at the low sum of 25¢".

By Christmas 1861 the romantic name had been dropped in favor of the L.D. Conery Restaurant, announcing in the WISCONSIN LUMBERMAN an apparent expansion; he was now "able to furnish at all times, oysters by the dish, can or case, also confectionaries, Yankee notions, jewelry, gold and silver watches, green and dried fruits, tobacco and segars".

The Civil War seemed to end the Gothic Recess, at least in name, and perhaps in spirit and style. Still, Pat Collins (i.e. Tap Snilloc) in his 1880 reminiscing stroll on the south side of Main Street, one by one marking off in his mind's eye the shops, stores, emporiums and saloons from the river to Strongs Ave., noted L.D. Conery's restaurant still there and "good for a bowl of oyster stew".

BEATS BEN-GAY

The following notice appeared in the Stevens Point GAZETTE, September 4, 1880:

TURKISH BATHS

Important Notice to the Afflicted.

Notice is hereby given to the afflicted public that a Turkish Bath, under the care of a regular physician of twenty years' practice, has been opened at Amherst, Wis., for the treatment of the various diseases that afflict suffering humanity. Experience has proven that many diseases among which are Rheumatism Neuralgia, Diseases of the Liver, Lungs and Kidneys, Scrofula and Female Diseases, yield much more

readily to medical treatment when assisted by the powerful influence of the Turkish Bath.

Treatment including ordinary medicine and board from \$6.00 to \$12.00 per week.

The Pinery is the official newsletter and magazine of the Portage County Historical Society, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

William G. Paul, Editor

Address:

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Stevens Point, WI. 54481

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Note: John Anderson is currently Acting President.

BOOK REVIEW

Ray Specht and John Cline. THE WISCONSIN VALLEY LINE (Stevens Point, Wisconsin, Antiquarian Press, 1979). \$9.50.

This first volume from the Antiquarian Press, both visually appealing and moderately priced, serves to fill a void in the history of Wisconsin railroading. The book is the work of Ray Specht, an Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, who furnished the techniques of academic research, and John Cline, a retired Milwaukee Road roundhouse supervisor, who furnished the operational understanding. The title refers to the independent Wisconsin Valley Railroad, which later became the Wisconsin Valley Division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company, "the St. Paul," and later still became a subdivision of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, "the Milwaukee Road."

The most important resource in this section of Wisconsin during the mid-nineteenth century was timber, therefore it was only fitting that lumbermen should have served as the initial and primary impetus for area rail development. The W. V. RR. Co. was incorporated in 1856 but actual construction of a rail line did not result from this action or from amended corporate actions in 1867 and 1870. Construction of the line, which was to primarily serve the area from Tomah to Wausau, did not begin in earnest until 1873. Resultant construction, as a division of the "St. Paul," would extend track to as far north as Blue Bill Lake, Michigan. As logging operations moved northward so did the railroad.

The railroad's existence depended on the lumber industry and as the southern areas became "cutover" the lumbermen either, as the authors state, "packed up mill, workers and track," and transplanted themselves in the north-country, or contracted with the railroad to transport northern timber to the southern mills. By the turn of the century the logging industry's importance and impact had faded appreciably, paper-making replaced logging, and the "wooded lake country" became a recreational resource to be developed. Passenger service in the early years was predominantly local, "short haul," and most active during weekends when the loggers and their families had time to enjoy their surroundings.

In 1912 the first major passenger service change, from "short haul" to "long haul," took place. Special weekend service from Chicago, which after World War I became popular as the "fisherman's special," was initiated. Such service was still popular with the coming of World War II, when it was temporarily halted as the country went to a war-time footing. The service was resumed in 1946 but was short-lived; an extensive highway system was being developed and passenger train service was being replaced by the automobile.

The "glory time" of the Wisconsin Valley Line, 1900-1940, when lumbering was still somewhat of a factor in its economy along with the developing papermaking and recreation industries, was followed by the WW II era when there became a high demand for scrap steel and the railroads pushed for abandonment of marginal lines. The post-WW II age brought forest exploitation to completion and the development of an extensive highway network, both of which effectively sounded the death knell of the line. By 1976 track mileage had decreased from a high in the "glory era" of approximately 400 to 138, about what it was when the Wisconsin Valley Railroad ceased functioning as an independent line in 1880. The story of the Wisconsin Valley Line parallels that of myriad other lines in railway history.

By focusing on the Wisconsin Valley Line the authors have furnished us with a fine example of what has occurred time and again throughout the railway industry and provided us with a vehicle with which to better understand the rail situation of today.

The very readable text is liberally sprinkled with contemporary newspaper accounts, excerpts from railway and lumber company records, and oral accounts from former railroad employees, all of which help to vividly portray the neap, zenith, and ebb of a railroad. Over two hundred photos, maps, and charts help to effectively illustrate the line's history as textually presented. Appendix II is invaluable in that it furnishes, at a glance, the complete construction and abandonment history of the line.

A drawback of the volume is the lack of a bibliography or bibliographic essay to inform the reader of the written sources utilized or the location of the numerous photo collections employed. An index would also have been useful. This volume should interest all who read it and those who wish to study the Wisconsin Valley Line further will be disappointed in the lack of a bibliography or index; but this in no way should substantially detract from a truly fine volume and welcome addition to the history of Wisconsin railroading.

reviewed by
Phil Kallas

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FEATURE
LOST HOUSES OF PORTAGE COUNTY

By Wendell Nelson

The Vaughn-Wiesner-Hebard House

Old houses have their share of coincidences. Some look alike, some are owned by the same family for three or four generations, and some witness the same events befall one occupant after another. The house that sat at 432 Church Street for forty-eight years had as its major coincidence the fact that it was owned for over thirty of those years by two men who were or had been sheriffs.

The house was built for D. H. Vaughn. It was begun in the fall of 1887, and completed the following spring, according to various sources, among them the tax rolls for the property. The rolls show an increase in the valuation of the lots from \$200 in 1887 to \$1000 in 1888 and \$1100 in 1889. This is evidence which shows clearly that some major improvements were made to the property in 1887 and 1888.

The old newspapers support this conclusion, and add many details. The first notice of the construction of the house appears in the Portage County Gazette on the day the contract was let, September 28, 1887.

"A contract was let this morning by D. H. Vaughn to I. M. Moss for the erection of a handsome new residence. It will be built on Mr. Vaughn's lots on Church Street, just east of the court house, and the work of laying out the grounds preparatory to laying the foundation, was commenced this forenoon. It will be of an attractive style and finish, with a two[-]story bay window in front, and a small tower extending above the same. A porch will run part way across the front and along the south side, and the entrance will be on the south corner of the front. The house will be two stories high, 36 x 48 ft., and the parlor and sitting room will be in front, 11.6 x 15 feet and 14 x 16 feet, respectively. Then comes a bedroom, 14 x 14.6, and the dining room, 12 x 20 ft. in size, with a kitchen 14 x 15 feet. Besides these a pantry and bath room will be on the first floor, with four large bedrooms on the second floor, and closets for each. The cellar will be 16 x 24 feet. The house will be nicely finished with stained glass, etc., and is to be completed by Mr. Moss on the 1st of June, 1888, at a cost to the owner of \$3,200. D. H. will have one of the most pleasant homes in the city, and he can feel assured of getting a good job, just what he contracts for."

Three days later, the Stevens Point Journal printed its announcement of the agreement, and added a few details of location.

"D. H. Vaughn on Wednesday last closed a contract with I. M. Moss for the erection of a residence on Church Street, the location being next to the Presbyterian parsonage, on a portion of the A. G. Ellis homestead. . . . Work has already been commenced, Mr. Moss intending to get it enclosed so as to do the inside work during the winter."

The next notice appeared in the November 19 Journal as part of a larger article about several of Moss' projects around the city. "Work on Sheriff Vaughn's house, which is also being built by Mr. Moss, is progressing finely. The plasterers are now at work."

The Gazette followed suit four days later:

"Work upon D. H. Vaughn's fine new residence, on Church street, is progressing, and the plastering is now being done. The contractor, I. M. Moss, will give the best of satisfaction to the owner."

The latest article so far available appears in the April 28, 1888, Journal, and is as much advertisement as information. Entitled "Are You Going to Build?" It not only describes Vaughn's house, but goes on to detail some of Moss' other operations and the layout of his shop.

"I. M. Moss, contractor and builder, has the new residence of sherriff Vaughn nearly completed. The house presents a very handsome appearance from the street, being decidedly attractive. This handsome residence will be ready for occupancy in about three weeks. Mr. Moss designed and drew the plans and looked after all the details of the work. The doors, frames, &c., were turned out in his shop and are a creditable job."

(Moss—1838-1914—was one of the most active contractors in the county until his move to Zion City, Illinois, in 1901. Among the buildings that he built were the J. D. Shafer house at 1716 Clark Street, the August Goerke house (old number: 1001 Clark Street), the W. W. Spraggon house (old number: 224 Ellis Street), the P. N. Peterson house in Amherst, the Scandinavia Academy building, and a school in Westfield. He also did many remodeling jobs. For those readers interested in the subject, I plan a series of articles on Portage County architects and contractors in the not-too-near future.)

Though an article describing the completed house has yet to come to light, the only extant photograph of it shows that it followed the projected plans fairly closely. It was a gabled house, with the gables turned to the side—i.e., not facing the street, so that the "side" of the house was the "front." (Is that clear?) Back and a little to the south of the main upright appears another two-story, gabled projection that looked much like the main one. As the plan described, the most conspicuous feature of the front was a two-story bay capped by a conical roof that had horizontal stripes in the shingles and an ironwork spire at the peak. The porch goes around this bay and then around the southwest corner of the house (the house faced west). The picture shows no firm evidence of stained glass, but clearly reflected in the afternoon sun are two panels of beveled-glass, one atop each of the front windows north of the bay (one on the first floor, and the other on the second). One detail not mentioned by the projection is a peculiar semicircular banner above the second-story beveled-glass window, extending above the eave and flanked by what appear to be columns or pilasters (false columns). In fact, the part containing the beveled-glass windows, the larger windows under them, and the banner, seems to be almost a two-story bay itself, but a shallow one not built out in three facets like the one with the front door and the conical roof.

One of the oddities of the history of this house is the fact that Vaughn lived in it only three years. His obituary in the January 21, 1929, Stevens Point Daily Journal says that he "went to Rhinelander in 1891, near where he took up a homestead [?] . . ." But he owned the house until the summer of 1893.

He apparently rented it out to various people before he sold it. One of his renters was probably George Hebard—later, like Vaughn, the county sheriff. A notice in the Gazette of August 16, 1893, reported that "Mrs. Owen Clark and Mrs. Geo. Hungerford have purchased the Wight property opposite the court house on Church street, for which they paid \$3,000. There are six lots in the piece, three facing on Church and three on Plover street. Two good houses, one of them occupied by G. F. Hebard, are also included in the deal. The ladies bought purely for speculative purposes, and will sell the property either in whole or in part."

(It will be noticed that Vaughn obviously lost money on the house if he paid \$3200 to build it and sold it for something like half of \$3000. The explanation may be the Panic of 1893, when employment and property values went down.)

That Hebard was a renter is implied by the word "occupied" rather than "owned," and the tax rolls do not show him owning the property this early. And the fact that he was already occupying the house before the ladies bought it, is proof that, if he occupied the Vaughn house, he rented it from Vaughn.

(But he did not rent here long. The September 13, 1893, Gazette reports his purchase of the house now numbered 1332 Brawley Street, at the northwest corner of Brawley and Plover streets, from E. R. Week, the first owner.)

The tax rolls show that Clark and Hungerford owned the house at 432 Church until 1899. During that time, they also rented it out. One renter was Gavin Campbell, who, probably because he was "general superintendent of the Wisconsin Central and Chicago & Northern Pacific and Chicago & Calumet Terminal" railroads, was accorded one of the longest obituaries ever printed in the old newspapers. It appeared in the Journal of February 3, 1894, and said, in part, that the family "at present are residing in what is known as the D. H. Vaughn residence on Church street."

Campbell had moved into the house in November of 1893. The November 8 Gazette reported that "Mr. and Mrs. Gavin Campbell and sons spent the last half of the week at Chicago and Oak Park . . . to look after the shipment of their household goods to this city. They have rented the D. H. Vaughn residence, on Church street, where they will soon be at home to their many friends."

But it should be repeated that by then—November, 1893—Vaughn no longer owned the house. It was probably called "the D. H. Vaughn house" because he was the first owner, and because he had only recently sold it.

The purchase of the house by Clark and Hungerford is mentioned in the tax rolls. The entry for 1893 shows D. H. Vaughn's name crossed out, and Mrs. Clark's written beside it, and she paid the 1893 taxes on the property on January 8, 1894.

(Mrs. Clark's husband, Owen Clark, was a lumberman and early mayor of the city. Their house, at 1479 Water Street, still stands, and will be the subject of some articles in the future.)

In 1898 she sold the house to Louis Wiesner; the tax rolls show him as the owner for 1899, and he paid the taxes for the latter year. Like Vaughn, Wiesner did not own nor occupy the house long, but for a much sadder reason. In January, 1900, he was shot and killed by Gabriel Green, in one of the county's half-dozen most sensational murder cases.

Less than two years later, Wiesner's widow sold the house to George Hebard, who, as we have seen, had rented it eight years earlier. The Gazette of October 2, 1901, reported that "Geo. F. Hebard and family moved into the Wiesner residence, on Church street, last Thursday, he having purchased the property from Mrs. Wiesner's representative, John R. McDonald. The consideration was \$3,500, and in the deal Mr. Hebard transferred his neat cottage home at the corner of Brawley and Plover streets."

This transaction is confirmed in the tax rolls. Hebard is listed as the owner of the property in 1902, but he paid the taxes for 1901, on January 6, 1902.

Hebard in his turn took in renters. The June 12th Daily Journal and the June 18th Gazette, both from 1902, announced the wedding of Dr. J. D. Lindores. Lindores not only rented rooms in the Hebard house but was married in it and Mr. and Mrs. Hebard were the witnesses at the wedding.

He owned the house until his death in 1925, but the tax rolls are in error; they show him as the owner--and the person who paid the taxes--until 1928. (The time of his death is well-substantiated in the county death records--he died on January 16, 1925--and in the January 17 Daily Journal.)

Probably the assessor or the clerk who recorded the tax payments simply wrote the name of the owner rather than that of the actual person who brought the money in, but even the "owner" column should not have had his name in it. Not until 1928 does that column list the owner as "George Hibbard [sic] Est. [Estate]."

In any case, his widow apparently sold the house to Asa A. Hall in either 1929 or 1930. The exact year of the sale is unclear from the tax rolls, because the 1929 Stevens Point rolls are missing. Mrs. Hebard paid the taxes on the property on January 19, 1929, but Hall is listed as the owner for 1930.

(He and "Anna Hall" are given as the owners in that year; who Asa was is unclear, but when he paid the taxes for the property on February 27, 1931, he was listed as "A. A. Hall, Ex." Was he the executor of the Hebard estate? And was his wife Hebard's widow? Hebard's obituary lists his wife's name as "Mrs. Anna Earlywine.")

Whoever they were, the Halls sold the house to Mendel Shafton in 1932, according to the tax rolls, and Shafton was the last owner of the house. In 1935, while he owned it, the house burned, and was apparently razed soon thereafter.

At that time the building housed offices for depression relief services. The May 26, 1934, Daily Journal reported that "Removal of the national re-employment offices from the Rothman block, 111½ South Third street[,] to the old Hibbard [sic] residence, 432 Church street, was announced today by Edwin W. Johnson, Wisconsin Rapids, district re-employment manager. All registration of unemployed will be handled at the new address beginning immediately."

Other offices were in the house, too. The February 25, 1935, Daily Journal gave some details. "The first floor was occupied by the work division of the Portage county relief department and the second floor by the drought relief division of the county relief department, the national re-employment office and the farm credit administration seed loan office for this district. In all, more than a dozen office workers occupied the building."

The fire was discovered at 7:30 a. m. on February 25 by a janitor. It apparently "originated from the hot[-]air furnace and . . . resulted from a hot smoke pipe which ignited the ceiling in the basement near the pipe. The fire made rapid headway as the flames followed up through the walls and spread through the interior."

The damage was extensive, according to the paper. "Holes were burned in the floors [,] and the entire interior was wrecked [,] with the exception of the rear part of the house. The fire ate away and destroyed a large area on the roof after penetrating the attic. The loss to the building alone was estimated at several thousand dollars."

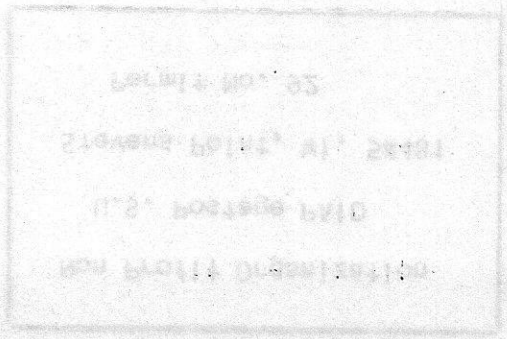
As was mentioned above, the house was apparently torn down soon after the fire, because another house stands on the lot now, one that must have been built in the late 1930s or early 1940s, if we judge by its architecture. Moreover, the valuation of the property dropped from \$1600 in 1934 to \$300 in 1935, and \$300 is the valuation listed in 1936, too.

So the property sat vacant for at least two years after the fire. In 1935, according to the tax rolls, Shafton sold it to C. H. Vetter, of the Vetter Manufacturing Company, who

owned numerous houses and other property around the city. 1935 is the first year that Vetter is listed as the owner, but Shafton paid the 1934 taxes on March 1, 1935.

So the sheriffs' house, a fine 19th-century house that once flattered Church Street, is gone, and with it the history that it once embodied. All that is left of its appearance is a photograph of some children on R. A. Cook's side lawn, across the street from 432, that just happened to catch the Vaughn house. If some proud father or mother had not taken that picture on that particular spot, we would not have even that.

Next: The Owners



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owned numerous houses and other property around the city. 1925 is the first year that
Yetter is listed as the owner, but Statton paid the 1924 taxes on March 1, 1925.
So the apartment house, a fine 19th-century house that once fronted Church Street,
is gone, and with it the history that it once embodied. All that is left of its appearance
is a photograph of some children on R. A. Cook's side lawn, across the street from 435,
that just happened to catch the Vaughn house. If some proud father or mother had not taken
that picture on that particular spot, we would not have even that.

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