



# PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Published by the Portage County Historical Society, P.O. Box 672, Stevens Point, WI 54481  
Tim Siebert, Editor

June 1996

## ANNUAL MEETING

The society held its annual meeting on April 20. The meeting took place at the society's Heritage Park. The School, Franklin House and Church/museum are being prepared for the summer season. This was a chance for the public to view the park while it was still being put together for the season. The business meeting began at 3:00 pm. A summary of what has been done over the past year was given and both the Rothman and Pine and Iron Awards were made.

The Rothman Award which came into being a number of years ago when Winn Rothman set aside a fund of money to sponsor the award. The basic idea behind the award was to recognize people who contribute something new to the preservation of our local history or researching the history. Each year a committee of three people assesses the submissions to the award and decides on a winner. The committee consists of John Holdridge (County Board), Neil Lewis (UW History Dept.) and William Paul (Society). This year the committee decided on a tie thus dividing the award into two \$75 awards. The winners were Russell Haines for his work on the Fox Theater. This is as comprehensive a work as has been seen in a number of years. It includes a video tape on the history of theater and written supports. A copy of this work can be viewed at the society portion of the archives at the

UW library. The other award went to Justus Paul for his work on a history of the UW-SP. The book, *The World is Ours*, is available at the university for \$25.

The Pine and Iron Award was established by the society's board many years ago to recognize individuals who had contributed to the preservation of history in the county. This year the board decided to recognize two people who have contributed much of their time and funds to make the Heritage Park a success. They are Cheryl Jean, who has, by herself, rehabilitated the Franklin House interior and part of the exterior. The other winner was David Cash, a member of the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders, Ltd. club, has contributed to both the restructuring of the depot and more importantly has provided our military collection with many items that we could not otherwise have gotten.

## Synagogue Museum Opens June 15

"The Home Front – Women in War" will again be the focus of this year's exhibits. See the stories of Portage County women and women with local ties during the period 1914 - present.

Open Saturdays 1:00 PM -- 5:PM

Located on Water St. 2 Blocks South of Clark St.

This has greatly enhanced the collection. The board would like to thank all four of these winners for their work in preserving our heritage.



Arne Maage  
Marilyn Knuth  
Janet Eschenbauch

Paul Seibert  
Ed Morganrath

**YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**

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Vice President-	Carla Boettcher
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Jerry Rohlinger	Richard Steffen
Mary Egle	Milo Harpstead
William Kennedy	Anton Anday
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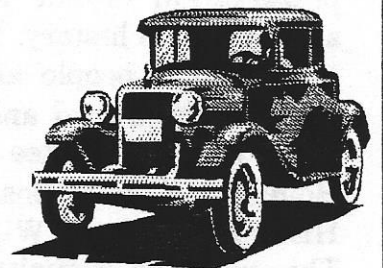
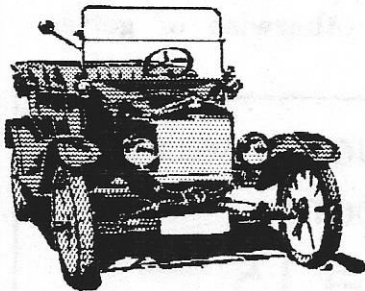
**SUMMER AT THE PARK**

The society has had the privilege of having the SPASH Teams Class work at the museum site on two different occasions. This was arranged between Paul Seibert (instructor) and Anton Anday. The group worked on cleaning up the site after the winter and the inside of the foundation of the Pierce Building which still contained much material from the clean up after the burn.

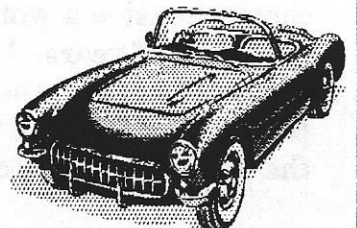
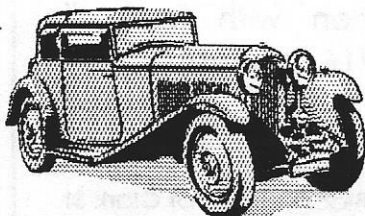
The board is also seeking estimates on putting in both water and sewer to the

**June 15**

**Heritage Park Opens For The  
Summer Season 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**



**Stevens Point  
Old Car Club  
Will have Vehicles  
On Display At 1:00 PM**



Located in Plover on Washington Ave.

2 Blocks East of Bus. 51

Just South of the Railroad tracks

museum building (church). The cost of this is about \$5,000. The Stevens Point Women's Club has already donated \$2,000 to this project and is holding an auction to raise additional funds for this project. We plan to have this complete before next fall. With this installed we can then begin to bring in children to experience the one-room school. Because of the poor weather a number of plans for the park have been placed on hold. We do plan to have many of the items completed this coming month. This included putting in the rest of the basement in the Franklin House, stone facing on the foundation of the front of the Pierce building. This must be done to prevent the twisting of the sill plates on the structure as they over hang the foundation blocks. Plans also call for the completion of the blocking up of the basement windows on the museum to help with climate control. Work on the depot also continues by the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders, Ltd. Again, this hinges on the weather. The society has also started to scrape the Franklin House so that it can again, be painted. We are going to return the building to white as that would have been the color on such a house in the



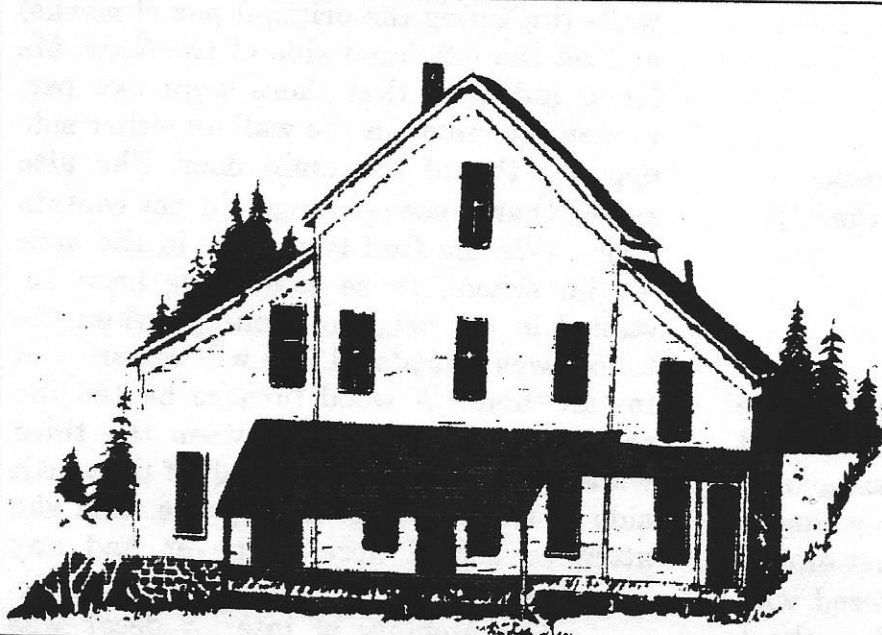
1870's.

## BAND CONCERT

We would like to thank Mike and Sue Riley, Elbert Rackow and Justus Paul for the donations sent to us to support the concert of the 1st Brigade Band in August. If you are interested in helping out with the financial obligation of bringing in the band please forward a check to the society and note that it is for the band. The cost of the band will be about \$3,000. This will involve paying for mileage for the members, a tent, toilets and rental for other items needed in the area. We will also need several people to help set up the site on the day of the concert. If you can help please let us know.

## PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORY

The board of the society is investigating the idea of publishing a coffee table style book on the history of the county. This book would coincide with the celebration of Wisconsin's 150th anniversary.



Rising Star Mill  
Hwy 161  
Nelsonville WI

See Calendar Of Events  
for List of Upcoming  
Events

For Additional Information  
Call Laurie Low  
(715)677-4710

This is one avenue the board is looking at to help with this celebration. The problem with this approach is the price tag-\$45,000. If you have any ideas regarding this proposal or other concepts please contact us.

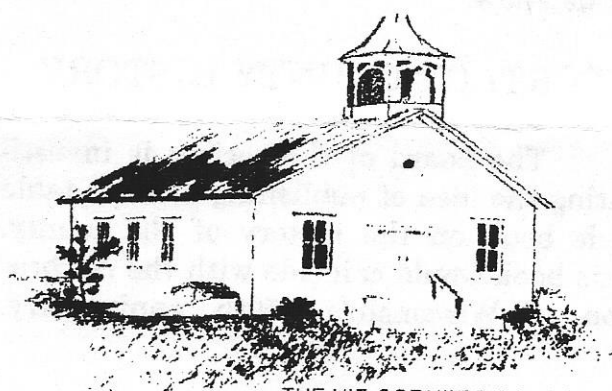
## GIFTS FROM OUR FRIENDS

Jack Larson donated a 1920's water cooler.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert McDonald donated a wide variety of family photographs, late 19th century greeting cards, World War II materials and a large scrapbook.

Mr. Frank L. Guth donated several photos and other artifacts.

Mary Jo Patton donated several items for our display construction.



THE HIE CORNERS SCHOOL

### Hie Corner School

By Anton Anday

Oral interview with Mrs. Francis Knoll (Francis Johnson), Portage County Historical Park.

#### Part 1

Ms. Knoll indicated to me that she attended the Hie Corner School from first grade till eighth grade. Her first year of school was about 1929. She is the youngest of a family of fourteen. One brother died in infancy, another brother suffered with dysentery and never attended the school.

The other five brothers and six sisters all went to the school. Two sisters who are twins are alive in the Amherst area.

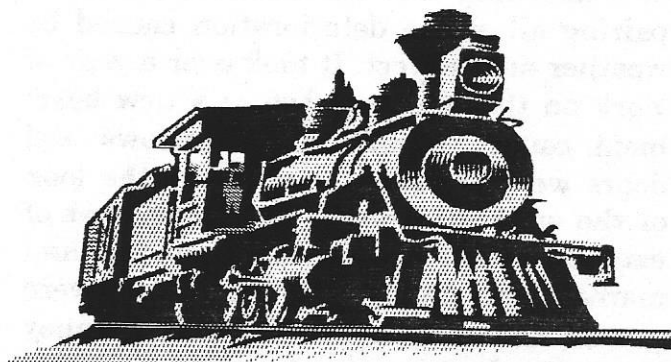
Ms. Knoll (Johnson) walked into the building which was under the process of restoration. She looked around and expressed her pleasure as to the shape of the building and to the authenticity of the restoration. She indicated that the original ceiling indeed was of wainscoting painted cream colored, somewhat tan. The walls were plastered and were painted of the same color. Her memory of this was very vivid since her father Louis Johnson, from the town of Amherst, was the original plasterer of the building. Wainscoting was on the bottom half of the walls as it is now. She indicated, looking at the color of the windows and sanded walls, ready for paint, that the color is indeed very close. (It was matched by Sherman Williams, from a paint flake taken from the lower wall.) There was a floor to ceiling wall from the door to the front of the chimney. Based on her recollection, there was no chimney at its present location at the time she attended school, but a wall did separate the entrance way from the class room. We did find the shadow mark on the ceiling, side walls (including the original pencil marks) and on the left hand side of the floor. Ms Knoll indicated that there were two permanent openings in the wall on either side opposite the of the main door. She also stated that these openings did not contain doors. (We did find two doors in the attic of the school, these may have been installed in the original openings when the school was remodeled. We will restore and install them.) A wood furnace heated the room and was located between the third window and the entrance wall of the north side of the building. During the time she attended school here, it never had any electricity.

The Memory of interior decor was

extremely important to us, since no interior pictures exist of the facility. Ms Knoll indicated that at the entry of the school on the right hand side of the entrance wall there were two rows of regular hooks for coat hangars. On the North side wall of the entrance way there were three rows of shelves where lunch buckets were stored. On the east side of the wall, south side of the door the hooks continued. In the Southeast corner of the entrance way was a cast iron sink, with a cast iron pipe leading through the wall to the outside. Opposite of the sink, on the entrance wall an aluminium cold water container was located. Aluminium cups were also located there. Inside the entrance wall between the two opening, where now a chimney is, an old fashion hand victoria was standing. Along the southeast side, inside of the entrance wall was a cupboard which held school supplies, paper, art supplies. Between the third, second and first windows on the south side were two glass bookcases filled with text books. Between the first window and the blackboard on the south side there is an upright piano. In front of it is the teacher's chair. Over the southwest side blackboard is the framed picture of George Washington and a roll down map of the United States. Over the Northwest side blackboard is a roll down map of Europe and the framed picture of Abraham Lincoln. Over both blackboards the Alphabet is posted from A to Z. The teacher's desk is located at an angle in the Northwest corner. On the wall from the corner to the first window on the north side is the bulletin board area. Between the second and third windows was the wood furnace that provided the heat for the school. Inside the Northeast entrance hall, a small gas stove was provided with three burners to heat lunches during the winter. A large iron hook from the middle of the ceiling was where they hung the gas lantern for evening use of the building and that it was

original in nature. Ms Knoll also said that hooks from the front window sides were used to pull a curtain across the room for Christmas and other performance.

*Continued in the next newsletter.*



From: The SOO Line Historical and Technical Society's Magazine

Bancroft Depot Restoration Nearly Complete  
by J. L. Fromm

Picture this if you will, a group of workmen brushing on final coats of interior paint inside an attractive Wisconsin Central depot. Awaiting the hanging of the name signs and planning the installation of the order boards. Distracted occasionally by the passing of a train, while anticipating the public's arrival. Only a memory of yesteryear? No, a scene from the present, in Plover, Wisconsin.

In 1898 the Wisconsin Central built a small one-and-a-half story combination depot at Bancroft, Wisconsin. The one-and-a-half story design was rare, only Bancroft and Dale were built in that style. This building served its purpose well, selling tickets and handling freight for close to half a century. After the "P-Line" was taken out of service in 1946, the depot was used for other purposes, and fell into disrepair. In 1989, with a donation of \$1000

from the SLH&TS, the depot was moved intact by truck to Plover. There, the depot was added to the display of buildings operated by the Portage County Historical Society, which is also directly adjacent to the old GBW mainline.

One of the first things done was turning back the clock on 50 years worth of remodeling and modifications, and repairing all of the deterioration caused by weather and neglect. It took over a year of work on the structure before a new basement could be built. New windows and doors were installed to re-create the look of the original, along with a fresh coat of exterior paint to match the classic gold and maroon, and also new wood shakes were put on the roof. Rebuilding the chimney and wood platform are planned, as well.

The basement will serve as a meeting room for the Central Wisconsin Model Railroad Club, which volunteered over 5,000 hours of labor on the project. The upstairs of the depot will be operated by the Portage County Historical Society and will house historic displays. At the time of writing the restoration is 80 percent complete, and in this carpenter's opinion, looks nicely done.



### Railroad History

by Jerry Rohlinger

My request for historical information on Portage County and the surrounding area regarding railroads has generated a response from Professor Maurice Perret. He has donated a copy of a study he and Professor Raymond Specht published in the spring of 1966 and a copy of a book, long out of print, "Thunder Lake Narrow Gauge", by Harvey Huston. I will enjoy reading these items and using the information in future articles.

Keep those articles and contacts coming! Soon I'll have more information than anyone could have anticipated. Call me at 341-2069 or send your information to the Society's P O Box.

P.S. I'm still waiting to here from a lady railroader.

## Membership Application/Renewal

The Society needs your support! Your renewal or new membership is necessary for the Portage County Historical Society to continue the preservation of our past.

Mail To:  
Portage County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 672  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



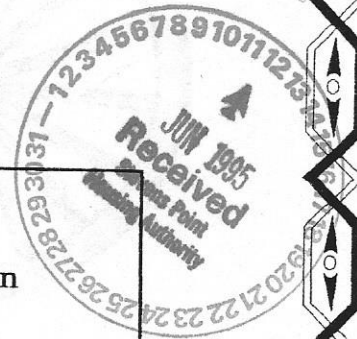
- Annual \$15
- Business \$25
- Contributing \$50
- Life \$100

# Calendar of Events

## Heritage Park

June 15 Official Opening of Park for Season  
Hours are 1:00 PM - 5:00PM Saturdays  
Stevens Point Old Car Club will have vehicles on display starting at 1:00 PM.

Aug 10 1st Brigade Band Concert.



## Synagogue Museum

June 15 Official Opening of Museum for Season  
Hours are 1:00 PM - 5:00PM Saturdays

"The Home Front -- Women in War" will again be the focus of this year's exhibits. See the stories of Portage County women and women with local ties during the period 1914 - present.

## Rising Star Mill

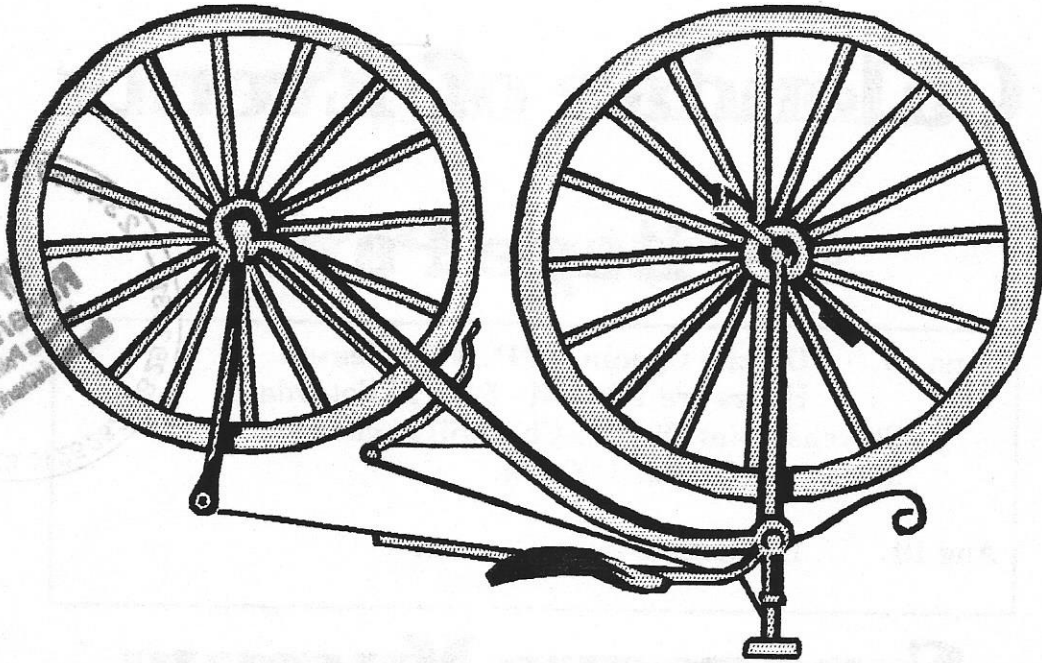
June 1 Fundamentals of Flyfishing.  
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM \$15.00  
Local Chapter of Trout Unlimited offers their expertise. Lunch Provided.

June 15 Joe Kimmel, Folk Singer, 7:30 PM  
\$5.00 at door.

July 13-14 11th Annual Art Show, 9:00AM - 6:00 PM  
No cover.

July 20 John Smith, Folk music, 7:30 PM \$5.00

Aug. 17 High Water, Blue-grass, 7:30 PM \$5.00



Portage County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 672  
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