



Portage County Historical Society

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

December 1997

President's Report

NELSONVILLE MILL

The mill committee has replaced a number of ground level doors on the south side of the mill. This is under the metal shed portion of the mill. This was necessary because of the deteriorating nature of the doors and the potential for vandalism at the site. The site saw two weddings take place this past summer and has had requests for more next summer. The music presentations and art sale were all a success. Many thanks go out to Janet Eschenbauch, society board member and mill liaison, for her shepherding of the project for the past several years.

SUMMER 1998

The special events committee has begun to organize what we plan to be an annual event. It will be called the Plover Portage Rendezvous. We have contacted a number of pre-1830's reenactors who will set up an encampment at the Heritage Park site on July 18 and 19. Information about the encampment has already been put out on the internet. It is our hope that about 20 to 30 camp units will be set up at the site. A demonstration on knife and hatchet throwing will take place as well as just seeing how people lived during the fur trapping era of Wisconsin.

Since this area did provide a portage for Native American groups in the area, the committee felt that this would be appropriate for the 150th anniversary of the state of Wisconsin.

FOUNDATION NEWS

The society has received a memorial in the name of Judy Courtney (\$55). Life memberships have also been received from Etta Owen, Maude Stafford and Sue Zach. The foundation now has slightly over \$70,000 in it and is generating about \$300 each quarter. We would like to thank Mr. Ramon Stade for his efforts on behalf of the foundation.

HERITAGE PARK

Now that the summer season has ended it is time to look at the achievements of the year and plan for next year.

Table of Contents

Article	Page
President's Report.....	1
Saga of a River Pilot Part 3 of 3.....	3
My Little Red School Houses Part 2.....	4
Plover Portage Rendezvous	5
Our Indian Heritage	7
Membership Application	8
Society Book Sale.....	9

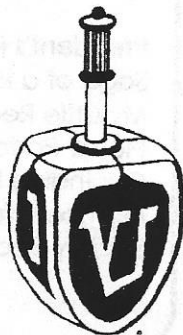
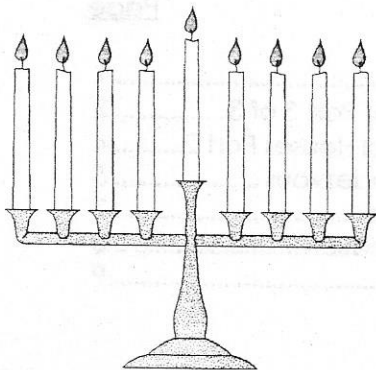
This past summer saw development on the depot, Franklin House and school. We have also been able to host a number of local elementary students (about 400) who have come to see the park and take part in a one room school experience.

Mr. Anday has been able to build a summer garden area on the north side of the Franklin House and built a front stair. Ms. Jean has, on the upstairs, been able to strip the wall paper from the stair well and hall as well as cleaning the bedroom that was never used by the family. This is the room that will be used for Mr. Perret's office. A plasterer has also been contacted about doing the upper hall and office room. The funding for this will come from the Perret memorial.

Mr. Anday has been able to obtain a piano from the Town of Linwood to be used in the school once it is tuned and refinished. He has also been able to begin the building of book cases for the school using doors that were obtained from a donor.

The deck on the depot is, as yet, only half complete and we are still waiting for the remainder of the planking. The security system in the depot is now active and we are ready to move it into the other structures.

Happy Hanukkah



Next summer we will continue the logging display on the first floor of the church and develop a World War II theme on the balcony. We will also have more space in the balcony thanks to the space made available in the Franklin House and Synagogue.

WATER STREET SITE

The Polish display saw large number of people attend the display and many came back several times. That is a great compliment to the Polish Awareness organization and we would like to thank them for all the work that they have done on the site. This display will also continue next year.

GIFTS FROM OUR FRIENDS

Ann and William Stielstra- A number of small household items for the kitchen, agricultural tools and kitchen cabinet

Tom Jensen family- St. Michael's wheelchair (1940's)

Mary Egle- series of small kitchen items and clothes from her mother's estate

Stevens Point Police- series of old style eyeglasses, cane and magazines

NEEDS

The society is still in need of the following items. If you have any of these please consider donating to the society.

1. White sheets
2. Industrial vacuum cleaner
3. Small ladder-free standing

COLLECTIONS

The society's military collection continues to grow and has become an excellent one. However, we are still in need of many items. This would include such

things as letters, discharge papers, assorted documents, any field issue items, any barrack items, weapons or any military related artifacts that might be available. If you have these items just stored in a garage or closet please consider a donation to the society.

We are also looking for elementary readers from just before the turn of the century to about 1920. These will be used in the school house.

Finally, if anyone has railroad related items-tools, papers, schedules and so on.

Saga of a River Pilot

By
Jerome Kaczmarek
Part 3 of 3

Raising and training draft horses was his hobby. he was a recognized expert on horseflesh and acted as an advisor to farmers when they went to select a team of horses. There were many fly by night horse dealers who would take advantage of people who weren't knowledgeable of what to look for in picking horses. Horse dealers soon discovered that when they saw my grandfather accompanying a potential buyer into their horse lot, they knew it was useless to try any deceit. His matched team would bring top dollar and were in great demand.

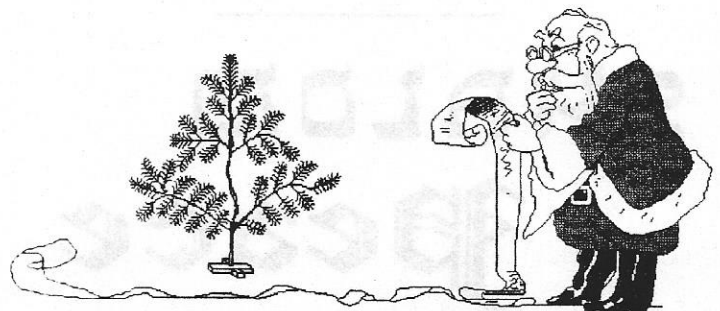
After the harvest was in he would buy livestock for the Gebert Livestock Company of Milladore, Wisconsin. In 1914 America began to prepare for war, the Gebert Co. was awarded a contract to buy draft horses for the US Army. Grandfather being an expert was certified as a US Army horse buyer. Realizing that he would be spending more time on the road, he decided to sell his adjoining farm. He then traveled throughout Central Wisconsin by horse and buggy and the railroad. He told me that the Army criteria was for a horse

to be high spirited and no more than half trained, the Army wanted to finish the training themselves.

His philosophy of life consisted of two qualities, honesty and plain old common horse sense. He was a very charitable person, no one in need was ever turned away, he loaned money at a low interest, gave money and food to the needy. He just couldn't stand to see a child suffer, times were hard and money tight, parents just didn't have the funds for doctor bills or medicine. If he became aware of the situation, he would pay for the doctor and medicine. He paid for eyeglasses in one case for teeth extraction and dentures for a needy adult. He would not accept repayments but would tell the person, "Maybe you will have a chance to help someone someday." Never would he talk about his works of charity if someone brought it up in a conversation, he would get that sly mischievous grin on his face, shrug his shoulders and change the subject.

In the business community he was highly respected, I remember banking people coming out to the farm, sometimes working to seek advise on whether a certain person would be a good credit risk, if he felt they were okay the loan would be given. The kitchen table was his desk for transacting business, I was privy to many of these meetings, where by lamp light, a

Merry Christmas



deal would be closed by a handshake, a man's word was his bond.

Phenomenal health was a reward he enjoyed, my mother or my older aunts never remember him being sick, even during the epidemics he never fell victim. He used to transport the doctor from farm to farm during the epidemics, that would allow the doctor to take a short nap between house calls. Sometimes the whole family was ill so he would do their farm chores and bring their supplies and medicines.

My grandfather's greatest sorrow was the fact that they had three sons, none of them lived beyond 18 months. One of the sons died as a result of an accident involving a fire. Five daughters survived. The sole survivor was Mrs. Anna Trader, but she passed on, May 21, 1990.

Grandmother Veronica passed away April 10, 1940, just one month short of their 48th wedding anniversary. Grandfather rented out the land and retired. He loved to walk along the riverbank, which was the east border of the farm, in quiet meditation, and visit with the fishermen at the bridge.

I hope someday the people of Stevens Point would see fit to put something in Pioneer Park to memorialize and honor these unsung men of valor, the river pilots and raftsmen who contributed so much to the beginnings of our city. The following lines in closing are most appropriate:

No river to wild
 No task too difficult
 The logs will get through

the end

SHALOM
Peace

**MY LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSES
 WERE WHITE**

Memories of Teaching in Portage County
 Rural Schools in the 20's and 30's
 by
 Ethelyn Wrolstad Aanrud
 'Teacher'

Part 2 of 3

The School House

I was hired to teach in the Oak Grove school, a pretty, white-sided school house surrounded by big oak trees on about half an acre of land. It had, besides the school building, a woodshed and two toilets with wooden screens in front of them -one marked "girls", the other "boys" (only the Loberg school had Chemical indoor closets) also, "girls", the other "boys" (only the Loberg school had chemical indoor closets) also, the flag pole and the pump.

As you entered the school house with its double doors, there was an entry with clothes rooms on either side; Above the clothes hooks were shelves for dinner pails. From the ceiling hung the rope of the school bell. In the large main room there were rows of desks to seat any number from 20 to 38 pupils.

In front of the room was a long recitation bench and the teacher's desk holding a row of textbooks and perhaps a globe. On either side and across the front walls were slate blackboards with eraser trays underneath. Above the blackboards were roll-down maps of North and South America, US and Europe. Also Wisconsin. Three or four large framed pictures were found in every school; "The Angelus", "Song of the Lark" - "Washington" -

Plover Portage Rendezvous

Rendezvous Located at: Heritage Park, Plover WI
July 18 & 19, 1998

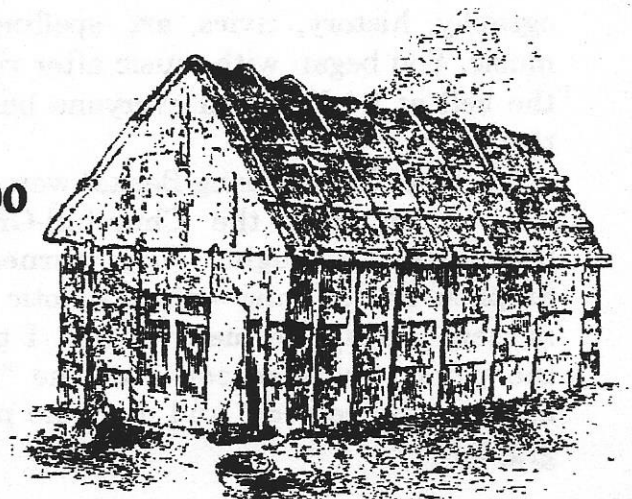


See Re-enactments
Life on the Frontier from 1760-1840
Tomahawk and Knife Throws
Authentic Foods
Traders

Adults \$2.00 Children \$1.00 Family \$5.00
Open Sat. & Sun. 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM



Sponsored by:
Portage County
Historical Society



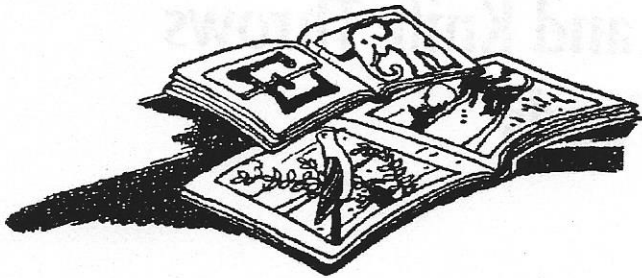
Directions on back of Flyer

"Lincoln". Shelves of library books were either in the back of the room or on side walls - wherever there was an empty space. Also a bulletin board. In the back corner was a sink, an earthen-ware water cooler with a bubbler - a sanitary item which replaced the water pail and common dipper. Some schools had the dinner bucket shelves on the inside. The windows had short, white curtains and shades. The room was heated by large sheet iron covered stoves or furnaces.

A School Day

It began about 7:30 and you'd go into the cold school room. The fire had to be started in the big wood stove. You'd empty the wastepaper basket into it, add some split kindling and chunks of wood and listen to it roar. Usually the room was warm by 9 O'clock.

It was time to write assignments on the black boards and plan the classes for the day. The eight grades had to be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, language, ge-



ography, history, civics, art, spelling and music. You began with music after ringing the bell at 9 'clock and everyone had settled down.

The "Golden Song Books" were used. Also songs from the Churchill-Grendal books were s taught. They learned the Stephen Foster song - the patriotic song, nursery songs, and many others. I played the piano. Some schools had the "music appreciation records" and used the phonograph.

In every rural school the same routine of classes could be found as the teachers followed a manual prepared by the Wisconsin Education Department which contained the order of classes, material to be covered in each class for the year.

The text books were fairly good. The children learned to read from the "Dick and Jane" books, the Elson Readers and others. Most knew how to read well by the time they were through the 8th grade.

Each class was from 10 to 15 minutes in length. There were two recess periods and an hour at noon - they were dismissed at 4. So the teacher taught, gave help, and scolded through the last minutes of the day. After helping to put on over-shoes, hunting for lost mittens and saying "good night" there came a time to just sit and perhaps cry.

After school

The day still wasn't over. There was housekeeping to be done. From a large tin can in the entry, a handful of green oily sawdust was sprinkled on the floor in front of the black boards to be swept down the aisles - paper was picked up and put into the wastebasket in preparation for the morning fire. Sometimes I had paid some big girl to do sweeping for me at 10 cents an evening. In one or two schools I paid someone to fire-up for me. In the winter the water cooler had to be emptied for fear it might freeze to pieces. That happened to me at Pioneer and I had to replace it. Also the blackboards had to be washed and some assignments written for the next day.

When the room looked tidy, it was time to correct papers, a never ending chore. In the late fall it meant sitting by lamp light as it usually was pitch dark by 4:30. It was sort of an eerie feeling being alone in the dark, quiet room with light

shadows on the wall reflecting unusual patterns. Maybe a mouse scampered across the room.

In those days few cars ever passed the school house so I was never frightened except for one time. I heard the sound of fumbling hands on the outside door knob and soon an old man walked in, red eyed and dirty looking. He had been walking home after visiting his son up the road and having seen the light in the school house, wondered if the teacher had forgotten to put out the lamp.

When I realized who he was, I asked if he wanted a ride home -he did- so I put my work away and gave him a ride about a mile down the road. He spoke in Norwegian and he soon learned who my folks were, where I lived and who I was related to.

I drove on home. I lived at home most of my teaching days driving the good Model T Fords about six or eight miles.

The Socials

One of the things we were expected to do in the fall was to prepare for the school "social". The school budget was usually very tight so there was no money for extra things a teacher might want. To raise money she put on a "social" - there were several kinds: "Basket" socials, "pie" socials" or "shadow" socials were the common ones. Usually there was a program or one act play. Extra lunch was served too. After the lunch was over, the seats were pushed aside and we'd play singing folk games: "Somebody's Waiting" - "The Needles Eye" - "London Bridge" - "The Farmer in the Dell" and others. Once in awhile there was square dancing but only if a fiddler was available

In the Peru School, enough money was made to have a swing and a teeter-totter purchased.

end of part 2



Our Indian Heritage

The American Indian artifacts were acquired by the Portage County Historical Society on October 16, 1997. The collection was donated to the Society by the Stevens Point Area School District. The District purchased these Indian artifacts from Mr. Virgil Peters at a cost of \$1500. Mr. Peters, a retired Stevens Point businessman, had decided in 1982 to dispose of his collection and had offered it to the District at less than one-half of the price listed in source journals. His reason was that he would like to see the items used with children of the District. Arlene Renken and William Palmer examined the materials when the District was first contacted by Mr. Peters, and decided that the educational value far exceeded the cost. It was the District intention to use the items, housed in permanent display boxes, as a traveling educational unit in correlation with K - 12 Art and Social Studies curriculum. Emphasis was to be placed in the fourth grade. These items were used in that fashion for many years.

Originally the collection was examined, identified and dated by Ms. Claudia Jacobson and Ms. Barbara Robertson of the Milwaukee Museum. As can be seen most of the items were dated between 1850 and 1900. In 1981, under Title IV, an "Indian Education Beadwork Display" was added to the collection. Probably because of over use these items were stored for a number of years at the Bliss Education Center's curriculum office until it was donated to the Historical Society in 1997.

It is our intent to display this collection at the Hie Corner School at Heritage Park in Plover. This one room school house will be used as a working school for children in the county. Future additions and displays will be added to the collection as they become available.



1st Annual Book & Stuff Sale

The society has a number of items that are offered for sale at our sites. Anton and Jerry put together a list of items. This list is presented on the next page. Please consider these items for Christmas presents. The sales will help the Society to continue its' work of preserving our heritage.

Thank You

Mail completed form to:

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

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: _____



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

Portage County Historical Society Publications

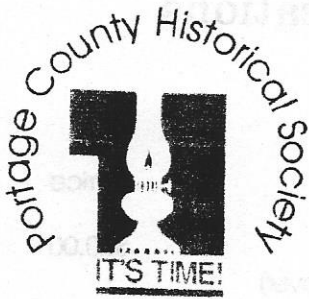
Books

Qty	Author	Title	Price
_____	Asbury Nix	Corregidor -- Oasis of Hope 50th Anniversary - Bataan & Corregidor (soft cover)	\$20.00
_____	Wendell Nelson	Houses That Grew (soft cover)	\$15.00
_____	Justin Isherwood	The Farm West of Mars Essays on rural life in Portage Cty (hard bound)	\$14.95
_____	Evarae Mallentine	Evarae's Scrapbook Book of Poetry (hard bound)	\$5.00
_____	Waclaw W. Soroka	A Fateful Meeting at Elsinore in 1580 (soft cover) History of Polish-English relations in 16th & 17th centuries	\$5.00
_____	Waclaw W. Soroka	Polish Immigration to the U.S. (soft cover)	\$7.50
_____	Lucy Shortell Precourt	Victorian Verses Poetry (soft cover)	\$1.00
_____	Janet Menzel Jurgella	Portage County Shadows Notorious People, Places, & Events from Portage County's Past. Essays re-publication (soft cover)	\$9.95
_____	Michael J. Goc	A History of Portage County receivable in June of 1999 (hard bound)	regular \$39.95 pre-sale \$35.00

Other items for sale from PCHS are:

Qty	Item	Description	Price
_____	Note Cards & Envelopes	Line art from the Plover Heritage Park 15 cards per pack. Available in: Hie Corner School, Bancroft Depot, Rising Star Mill	\$2.50
_____	T-shirts	With PCHS logo 2 colors - Burgundy & Jade Sizes L, XL, XXL Size _____ Color _____	\$10.00
_____	T-shirts	Rising Star Mill Logo various sizes & colors. Specify size & 2 color choices Size _____ Colors _____	\$8.50

# of Items					
Ordered	Name	_____			Total
					\$
_____	Address	_____			
	City, State, Zip	_____			



The Society holds a monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings start at 7:30 PM and are held in the basement of the Synagogue Museum, 1475 Water St., Stevens Point, WI 54481, Phone # (715) 344-4423. All Members and the general public are welcome.

To contact the Society write to the address below or call:

Tim Siebert (715) 344-7607

or

Carla Boettcher (715) 344-6383

For contributing articles or comments on the Newsletter:

PCHS Newsletter, 1418 Wisconsin St., Stevens Point, WI 54481

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

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 92 Stevens Point, WI 54481
