



# Portage County Historical Society

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Tim Siebert, Editor

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## President's Report

### SUMMER PROJECTS

With the coming of summer the society has embarked on a number of projects at Heritage Park prior to our Rendezvous. The school house roof has been painted and sealed. Mr. Anday has arranged for the rather messy north end of our parking lot to be fixed up. The Village of Plover crews have taken away the old barrier and remaining tar from the old road. They put up new signs and laid new dirt on the old site. We would like to thank Ms. Simonis for her help on siding the north side of the Pierce Building and Mr. Worzinik for his help in cutting the grass and doing the trim.

The UW-SP museum class has installed its display, "100 Years Ago", and it is, again, very well done. Themes include farming, the Opera House, schooling, bicycles, and the Weber Band. We have also begun to receive the services of a blacksmith. He will, periodically, work the smithy and will be one of 2 or 3 smiths working the shop during the Rendezvous.

### MEMBERSHIP/BEQUESTS

The society would like to welcome Marcia Ann Kuehl, William Taylor, and The Sons of Norway as new life members.

The society's 1999 membership

stands at about 340 as of June 25. In this respect we would like to solicit the help of the membership in interesting others in joining. If you wish to have membership information please contact Tim Siebert at 344-7607.

The society was also included in the will of Vera Scheffner. We have been informed by her lawyer that the society will receive an amount from her estate but the amount was not stated. As in the past, half of the amount will be placed in the foundation and the other half used on the society's projects.

### "Hush My Babe"

by  
Bob Andrews

After the territorial organization in Wisconsin the territory was divided by the

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national government into two judicial circuits, the eastern and western districts. Portage County was placed in the western district and the first court was held in the Village of Plover in August 1845, United States Judge David Irwin presiding. The court was held in an unfurnished warehouse owned by John Curran, the father of the Curran brothers, and donated by him for that purpose.

Judge George W. Cate, in 1896, told the first session of the United States court held in Portage County: "The court convened on the last Monday in August (25th), 1845. Present: David Irwin, Judge; George W. Mitchell, deputy United States Marshall; Melson Strong, Sheriff; and George Wyatt, Clerk."

Sheriff Strong being out of the territory, he appointed George W. Mitchell Undersheriff, and Mitchell appointed William Fellows of little Bull Falls and a man named Wilder deputy sheriffs for the term. A grand jury was in attendance, some of which had traveled a hundred miles for that purpose. It was an event looked forward to by the isolated population scattered in logging camps, at

sawmills and shingle shanties remote from each other. A first term of court in a western country was an epoch. Everybody attended. Frequently campfires were built and people sat about them all night. A load of people came from Madison, 125 miles, in a two-horse wagon to see the first term of court in the pinery. All the possible elements of character were represented from the 'strictly temperate' to the 'half seas over'. By the time the grand jury had been sworn in, the latter were becoming prominent. One Robert Wakely, a man of high social qualities, whose good nature never forsook him even when drunk, rode his horse into the courtroom by the wide door, just to salute the Judge. He held his hat off to the right of his head as in military salute, looking straight at the Judge, a sweet smile lighting up his countenance, and softly singing that ancient lullaby commencing, 'Hush my babe, Be still and slumber,' all the time forcing his horse along.

"The Judge was wild. He was recently from old Virginia, a man of great

## Portage County Lifestyles 100 Years Ago

**Weber Band**

**Portage County's Opera House**

Do you remember these, try recalling how the following items were important 100 years ago?

**Potatoes**

**Bicycles**



Give Up? Then come to the Portage County Historical Society's Heritage Park in Plover to find out.

Located between Madison Ave. and Washington Ave., on the south side of the railroad tracks. Open:

**June 12 thru Sept 5  
Saturday & Thursday  
1:00 - 5:00 PM**

learning and a high appreciation of the law. He demanded the arrest of the intruder. Many thought it funny and would pat Wakely on the back, but more frowned upon it. The Marshall had stepped from the room and the Deputy Sheriffs were slow to act, Mitchell was sent for. He came and proved himself to be a man who not only knew his duty but also had the nerve to do it.

He speedily took Wakely from his horse and had him before the Court. The result was that he, Wakely, was severely reprimanded and imprisoned in the Marshall's bedroom a day or two and then Judge Catlin of Madison, an old and highly respected citizen, obtained his release by reason of the many good qualities of Wakely." So ended the first court case in Portage County.

Note: Mr. Bob Andrews depicted this historical event in an etched picture in 1987. He presented this picture as his gift to the public of Portage County on the occasion of the bicentennial civic celebration of the Constitution of the United States. The original artwork now hangs on the second floor of the Portage County Court House as part of panel one of



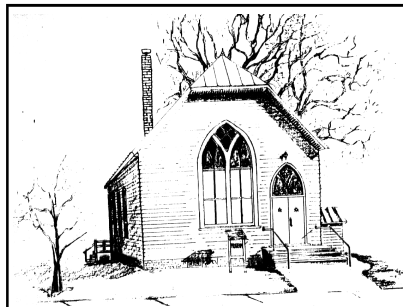
the historical display of law in Portage County.

### Andrew Was My Uncle

by  
Palmer Myhra  
January 1995

One of the most interesting characters I have known in my life was my Uncle Andrew. He has been gone for 10 years, now, but I never will forget him. He never had a steady job, drank up all his money, never had his own home or family, never had much money or did anything very great but he had a lot of friends and 39 nieces and nephews. He wondered sometimes if we would remember him, but after reading the story of his life, the fact is, how could anyone forget him?.

Andrew was born July 20, 1892, the second son of William and Anna Lamphear in the town of Lind, Waupaca County, Wisconsin. I do not know very much about his life as a young man, as he was almost 30 years old when I was born. He only went to school until the Third Grade, when he was 12 went out to do a man's work. He worked for the neighbor farmers, in saw



## Let's Talk

### The 1999 Season's display at the Synagogue/Museum, 1475 Water St.

Features displays on movies and film projectors, phonographs, cameras, typewriters, radios, printing companies in Portage County, telegraph, TV's, Plover Telephone Company, Nelsonville Telephone exchange, radioptican projectors, and there impact on us.



**June 12 thru Sept 5**  
**Saturday & Sunday**  
**1:00 - 5:00 PM**



mills, and spent some time as a lumberjack, often earning money trapping. World War I soon came along and Andrew was drafted, ended up in the Infantry.



1918 found him in the trenches over in France. This was a big change in his life. He did what was asked of him, a country boy who knew well how to handle a gun. At one time, he shot two escaping German prisoners, he had been guarding. This

he would not discuss except when he had been drinking. It always must have bothered him because it happened just a few days before the Armistice ended the war, and came home to find his girl friend had married someone else.

Andrew look to the bottle and stayed with it the rest of his life. Despite all his problems, he had an excellent sense of humor and could find something funny about most anything. All his life he liked to talk about the Army and The War. He look great pride in the fact he had so many nieces and nephews in World War II and was very interested in what we did. He carried his discharge papers in his shirt pocket all his life. There wasn't much left of them when he died, but I have the discharge papers. His occupation listed on the service record says, "Muskrat Trapper", which must have been what he was doing when he was drafted. Farmer, would have been a better term. After the war, he never shot a gun again.

To him, the 3 greatest men who ever lived were Pershing, Eisenhower, Sergeant York, the World War I hero. When we were young, he used to show me the old Army overcoat with all the bullet holes in it. When we got older, we realized they really

must be moth holes, because no one could have survived that many shots.

Andrew really wasn't the best influence on us young boys, but he always liked kids and we found him very interesting with all his war stories, adventures and ideas. One idea in particular he was obsessed with, that is that someday man was going to the moon. He especially wanted to talk about that when he had been drinking. Many people said he was crazy to talk about that and maybe he should be locked up. Sure enough, man went to the moon July 20, 1969 on Andrew's 77th birthday. He simply said, "I told you so", and I was glad he lived to see it. He was a great weather forecaster. He went by the signs in the sky and behavior of the animals and was very often right. Although he made one mistake in this area that he never forgot.

We really didn't see much of Uncle Andrew until we moved to a farm near where he lived. Andrew chewed Copenhagen from the time he was 12 years old, and was a very accurate spitter. Seems he could hit a small can way across the room. However, one night he stayed at our place and my mother put him in bed with my brother and I. Andrew chewed day and night. He slept on the outside farthest from the window. He would wake up, sit up, and spit over us and out the open window. Of course there was a screen on the window which looked quite messy by morning.

In 1935 Andrew got about \$400 World War I Soldiers bonus. Now that was a lot of money in those days. He could have bought a farm with that. Most money he had ever seen and got him on a good old time drinking spree. It must have been almost a month that he was seldom sober but he had a good time as long as it lasted. He bought drinks for people but one

particular thing he did was to buy radios for people. He thought everyone should have a radio so if he liked someone who did not have a radio he would buy them one. He look one home but old Grandpa threw that darned contraption out. Said he had enough noise and commotion around the house with Andrew and didn't need more of that with a radio too. Andrew ended up with his money all gone and not even a radio for himself.

When I was in High School we would go down town at noon and sometimes see Andrew get thrown out of a tavern because his money was all gone. Then I wouldn't admit that was my uncle but when he and I got older I would always say "that old Andrew he is my favorite Uncle".

One snowy winter night someone knocked on our door. They had found Andrew who they had found laying on the road in a snowbank. He was cold and stiff and passed out. We laid him down on the floor by the stove and in the morning he was gone. I guess he had plenty of antifreeze on the inside. He always seemed to find some place to stay and to get something to eat. He seemed to have a fear of fires and never built a fire to keep warm instead he would sleep with all his clothes on and covered with a pile of old blankets. He only used a fire to make himself some hot coffee. There were times when he slept with his earflaps and mittens on. He never wore shoes only a pair of rubber or tennis shoes with at least 2 pairs of socks. He always patched his own clothes and sometimes had patches over the patches.

Andrew always was a clean shaver, although there were times when I doubt his bloodshot eyes could see himself in his little cracked and broken mirror. He always had a fresh hair cut. He would put a bowl on his head and cut according to that. He never went to a barber, except in his last years, when he could no longer

manage that. When it came to taking a bath that was a different matter. He said "it was foolish to take a bath in the winter time, --- might catch a cold." I don't ever remember him having a cold, but if he did, I am sure he had the medication for that.

It seemed that he wore winter underwear all year around, and sometimes 2 or 3 pair of bib overalls with a flannel or wool shirt. He liked overall jackets and wore them until they were ragged as Festus in Gunsmoke TV. One fine spring day in May we heard a big commotion down in the creek. It sounded like a bear but was only Andrew getting his Spring Bath, and washing his clothes all at once.

Most of Andrew's brothers and sisters were tall strong people. Uncle George, the youngest of 10, was about 6'5" tall and about 240 pounds, a very strong man. Andrew was short, about 5'8" weighing about 200 pounds, but was strong as a bear. The Madson cousin's often referred to them as "Uncle High" and "Uncle Wide". The two never got along at all. They had very different personalities. Andrew always seemed to be well satisfied with his lifestyle, and was friendly with a good sense of humor. George, on the other hand, who led same kind of life always complained, was very crabby, and always saw the dark side of any situation.

In the Spring of 1945, when I came home from Europe I went all over town to see if there was anyone I knew after this time away. I went into the Hotel Tavern, and there was Uncle Andrew, drunk as usual. He grinned, raised his glass of beer in the air spilling half of it. said, "Hi", just like he had seen me a few days ago, and said "glad to see you made it. I was in War I, you were in War II, and in the next war we will kill all the 'Polacks'. I looked around, and my gosh, the place was full of Polish people. I thought that Andrew and I

were really in for it. They all looked at me and at Andrew and just went back drinking their beer. I guess they had heard so much of his silly talk when he had been drinking that they ignored it or else didn't want to beat up on a young fellow just back from overseas.

In the late 1940's Andrew look to living in a granary on my father's second farm. Then came a day in about the year 1954 when Andrew didn't forecast the weather just right and had a bad experience. He always said that "someday a tornado was going to come from the Southwest and destroy some of these buildings." Well, the tornado came all right, but it came from the Northwest. It seems it was a Saturday evening just before dark. Andrew was just home from a little drinking spree and was home in bed when it hit. If he had been sober, and heard it coming, he would have sat up or got up and would have been killed or badly injured. Machinery in the shed including a corn binder, grain binder and other equipment went right over his head and ended up in the woods. I had heard about it the next day and went to see. "What happened, Andrew", I said. "I done know



2nd Annual

# Plover Portage Rendezvous

Rendezvous Located at: Heritage Park, Plover WI  
**July 17 & 18, 1999**



Re-enactment of:  
Wisconsin Frontier Life 1760-1840  
Period Crafts and Arts  
Tomahawk and Knife Throws  
Traders

Authentic Foods

Adults \$2.00 Children \$1.00 Family \$5.00  
Saturday 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

This Event Hosted by:  
**Portage County Historical Society**

Thanks to Some of Our Sponsors:













Tank  
-N-  
Tummy

## 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 |

for sure", Andrew replied, "But, I don't think the old man wanted me up there yet. There was a terrible explosion and it rained on me. It was almost like the Western Front", referring again to the War. He had made himself a cup of coffee and was holding it in a badly shaking hand. He lived almost 30 years after that, but as long as he lived he had the fear that some tornado was going to come back and get him.

End of Part I

## It's Rendezvous Time!

Get the kids, momma, relatives, and neighbors packed into the vehicle, point it toward the Heritage Park and GO.

### Summer Events at the Rising Star Mill Hwy 161 Nelsonville

**July 9th, 10th, & 11th:** 14th Annual Open House - Art Show. 13 years of successful art shows guarantee an enjoyable visit. Stop in and tour the building while seeing some great artwork.

**July 17th:** Music with Highwaters. Bluegrass bonanza! Highwaters faithfully returns to enliven the Mill with a rich repertoire of bluegrass, country and old timey tunes. Don't miss it.

**August 14th:** Music with Bill Machecknie. Songsmith Bill Machecknie will grace the Mill with a mix of witty original songs and a sweet collection of poems he has put to music by the poet Naomi Shahib Nye. A unique evening for central Wisconsin.

**August 28th:** Music with Kay Hansen. From California, Kay brings with her the musical heritage of the wild west. Enjoy the history of outlaws, cowhands, and vaqueros and the lure of life in a by-gone era.

**September 11th:** The Rising Star Mill will end its season in a big way with a tribute to all of its supporters! Join musicians L. J. Booth, The Can't Lie Low Trio, Barb Achten, Joe Ebel and more for a night of fun and great music.

All music concerts will begin at 7:30 PM and the admission will be \$6.00.



#### Schedule of Events

July 17-18, 1999

Three Blacksmiths will work each day  
Many ongoing demonstrations daily

##### Saturday

11:00 AM	Kids Tomahawk & Knife Throwing Competition
12:00	Noon Enjoy Lunch
1:00 PM	City and County Officials Tomahawk & Knife Throwing Competition
2:00 PM	Native Bow Shooting Competition
3:00 PM	Men's Tomahawk & Knife Throwing Competition
5:00 PM	Dutch Oven Cook-off
7:00 PM	Weaving Demonstration at Franklin House

##### Sunday

10:00 AM	Women's Tomahawk & Knife Throwing Competition
2:00 PM	Flint & Steel Fire Starting Competition



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

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