



Portage County Historical Society

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

March 1999

President's Report

NELSONVILLE MILL

Mr. Charles Terry Anderson from the F & M Bank has given an endowment to the Nelsonville Mill. The amount of the endowment is \$12,374. This is largest single gift the society has received. We wish to express our deep thanks to Mr. Anderson for this gift. It allows the mill committee to begin to plan for the long range care of the mill instead of living hand to mouth.

The grant was in the form of stocks that the society has been able to sell and invest the funds in our foundation in a fund set up just for the mill.

Mr. Anderson's Great, Great Grandfather, Charles Stoltenberg, sold the land that the mill is on to Jerome Nelson. Nelson built the mill but four generations of Stoltenbergs have been served by the mill as they farmed in the area. Mr. Anderson's father, Charles, operated the mill in 1942 and 1946.

Mr. Anderson feels that the mill is of local historical and cultural significance. He feels that his gift will help solidify the care of the mill. Again, thanks to Mr. Anderson for his gift.

ANNUAL MEETING

The society's annual meeting will

take place on April 10. We will be at the Center Point Market Place starting at 1:00 and running until 5:00. We will have a number of our publications on sale and information about this summer's activities.

We will also have a program put on by Sam and Karolyn Solberg who portray a Norwegian Civil War Officer and his wife from Wisconsin. The presentation will be put on twice-at 1:30 and, again, at 3:30.

The society will also be presenting both the Rothman Award and the Pine and Iron Award. In addition we will elect 4 board members and officers. We would like to invite all of you to the meeting and enjoy the presentation.

BOOKS

The society would like to thank Mr. Justin Isherwood for his permission to reprint his booklet *A Place Called Plover*

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Portage. They retail for \$3.00. If you wish to purchase one they can be obtained from the society or the Book Garden or The Little Professor.

The board of the society decided to reprint the book so as to have them available at the summer rendezvous. We hope that the booklet will help people understand the importance of this area to the early trappers and traders.

FOUNDATION

We would like to welcome Jan Van Tassel as a life member who donated \$100 in the name of her husband. Mr. Ramon Stade, who has run the foundation from its beginnings, has done an excellent job in our investments. With the mill grant and the life membership added to the foundation we have been able to top \$110,000 invested. We are both proud of

this achievement and, obviously, very happy with this. The foundation generated over \$4,500 for the society's projects in 1998. We would like to encourage memorials to the foundation and/or life memberships of \$100. All these funds will be placed in the foundation to generate interest for the society projects. If you wish to endow a particular project or item please consider the historical society foundation.

NEEDS

The society would like to ask our members to consider a donation of any of the following items.

1. Military items of any kind including letters, papers, accouterments and so on
2. Telephones, old radios, old

Annual Meeting

April 10th, 1999
CenterPoint Market Place
Center Court

Sam & Karolyn Solberg

Portray a
Norwegian Civil War Officer
and his wife from Wisconsin.

Performances
at
1:30 & 3:30



Society Books For Sale

Information:
Nelsonville Mill
Heritage Park Displays
Synagogue Displays
Plover Portage Rendezvous

Annual Business Meeting
Election of Board Members

phonographs, old TVs or calculators

3. White sheets
4. Card tables-they need to be functional but the tops do not need to be in great condition.

WATER STREET SITE

The society has received an \$1,100 grant from the room tax, special events fund to help defray the costs of our new display at the site. This is to be called "Let's Talk". The theme will involve the way we have progressed in communications. This would include the obvious such as radio, TV, and newspapers but also other smaller types of communications-politics, military, toys, and so on. We hope to open the display for a two year run in June. If anyone has any items that they think might be included please let us know.

DOCENTS

This summer will require the society to have docents at both the Water St. site and at Heritage Park. The board has considered the idea of hiring docents for both sites but this would run into about \$4,000. This is obviously money that could be put to better uses. **WE NEED YOUR HELP** at both sites. As in the past we plan to open in June and be open until sometime in September. This will involve being open on weekends - Saturday and Sunday - from 1:00 to 5:00.

GRANT APPLICATION

The society has contacted the Jefferies Family Foundation in Janesville about the updating of the Water St. building. This would involve a total look at the structure with an architect, probably in the fall.

If the foundation chooses to fund the

project then a matching funds program would be set up. The work on the building would involve redoing the windows, rebuilding the basement windows, put wooden siding back on the building, work on the chimney, roof and basement leak problem. At this point it is just speculative as to whether or not this will happen. If not some other way to take care of the major structure problems will have to be looked at.

A History of Plover

by
Michael Riley
May 4, 1984

Part 4

The Second Village of Plover

In the early 1900's a movement began to incorporate Plover as a village once again. According to the Village of Plover's Ordinance Record from 1912-1931, a petition was introduced in the Circuit Court of Portage County on February 3, 1912, "In the matter of the incorporation of the Village of Plover." The petitioners were E. H. Rossier, Geo. Yorton, H. N. Warner, M. C. Skinner, and F. E. Halladay.

Judge Byran B. Park gave orders to hold an election on March 5, 1912, at the GAR Hall in Plover. There were 71 votes cast that day with 48 votes in favor of incorporation and 23 against. The population of the new Village of Plover was 330 people .

The Village Board then began to set up the framework for government. From 1912 until 1931 the Village of Plover once again existed. During the majority of these years, Salter Barnsdale served as the Village President. From the board's minutes, it appears as if the village had

begun to feel the effects of the Great Depression. The board began to lay aside the payment of certain bills in early 1930. In a November 3, 1930 meeting, the Village Board voted to borrow \$203.00 from Walter Barnsdale and \$115.00 from Felix Li la.

At the March 2, 1931. meeting, "The clerk read petition asking for question of dissolution of village be submitted to ballot. Motion made and seconded that petition be granted. Motion carried."

Other board meetings took action to extend the payment of taxes on real estate and to take action on the non-residential poor. The election was held and the vote was in favor of dissolution. The September 26, 1931, meeting, authorized President David Lila to "transfer certificate of title of fire truck to Town of Plover according to their agreement." He was also authorized to transfer by deed, Lot 6 block 16 to the Town of Plover.

The last board meeting of the Village was held on October 5, 1931. At the final meeting the Village turned over to the Town of Plover its snow plow, school, balance left over of \$59.81, and "anything

left that belongs to the Village of Plover to be turned over to the Town of Plover."

Money problems appear to have been the principle reason for the dissolution of the Village of Plover in 1931. This view is reinforced by an article from a booklet published in 1965 when there was another move to incorporate the village. The article emphasized that what hurt Plover in 1931 was that the potato was king and because of thin soil, lack of fertilizer and a drought coupled with disease and insects the four potato warehouses in the village were left empty.

The Third Village of Plover

Between the years 1931 to 1971, the Village of Plover was once again governed by the Town of Plover. In 1965 there was another strong movement to incorporate Plover into a village, but it was met by an equally strong movement to resist it.

The forces for incorporation published a booklet entitled, The Village View, in which they presented their



“The Conference of Women’s Causes to Benefit the Union of

An Original Play

Put on by the 7th and 8th Grade Class at St. Paul Lutheran School

1919 Wyatt Ave.

Date: Thursday March 11, 1999

Showings at 1:00, 3:30, and 6:30 p.m.

In School Gymnasium



arguments for incorporation. They stressed that there would be tax advantages in being a village and that a village could better meet the needs of a growing municipality. They further argued that the newly proposed village would not be facing another dissolution since the villagers' wealth was based on a number of different industries and not just potatoes.

The opponents published a pamphlet countering the incorporation arguments. They argued that the Town government had not failed and that it could better meet the needs of the community. They further argued that a village would lead to a duplication in services, such as fire engines, halls, police protection, etc. and this would lead to an increase in taxes. In addition to this, they further claimed that fifty percent of the business people opposed incorporation and many would leave if incorporation occurred. The opponents further contended that incorporation would destroy a sense of community and pride in what had become known as Plover.

The election turned into a decisive victory for the forces opposing incorporation. The vote was 339 against incorporation and 168 for. The Stevens Point Daily Journal stated that the debate had been heated and sometimes bitter.

The land that the proposed village would have covered was basically the old Village before the last dissolution. The village would have covered about 3.5 square miles with an estimated population of 1000.

Those favoring incorporation began pushing hard for a new village again in early 1971. A petition to incorporate a 12.5 square mile area as the Village of Plover was reflected by A. J. Karetski, the State Director of Local and Regional Planning, because it took in too much territory. Mr. Karetski stated that there were good reasons for incorporation and he

recommended that the supporters for incorporation should resubmit a plan which would cover approximately half of the area.

The incorporation forces took Mr. Karetski's advice and they resubmitted a plan for a proposed village which was 6.5 square miles with an estimated population of 2600. The July 1 issue of the Stevens Point Daily Journal reported that A. J. Karetski ruled that "the proposed village is in the public interest" and he ordered a referendum to be held. Judge James H. Levi set the election date for August 19, 1971.

Out of a possible 1700 voters, only 600 voted. The results this time were 311 for incorporation and 289 against. This struggle did not provoke the bitterness and hard feelings that the 1965 incorporation battle had. In fact, the Town of Plover lost most of its board members to the Village of Plover since they lived in the new village.

Plover Today

When Plover was incorporated in 1971, it had a population of approximately 2,618 with a total land area of 6.74 square miles. A special census was conducted on December 8, 1975, and the population was 3,408. The total land area was increased in May of 1981 to 7.23 square miles with an annexation.

Plover is governed by a seven member Village board. It functions largely by a committee system. The Planning Commission and the Public Works Committee are the two advisory bodies which most directly deal with the physical growth of Plover. The Village Board makes the final decision on actions taken by the committees.

The Village of Plover organized a police force in 1975 which is made up of

three officers, a Chief, and a secretary. Plover also has a 32 member paid-on-the-call fire department which provides services to Plover and five other townships.

Plover is located in the center of the state in a geological province known as the "central sand plain." The area is mostly flat, unglaciated lands composed of glacial outwash sands called "Friendship" sands. "Friendship" sands are known for being very porous. The topography of the village is relatively flat with the greatest relief being the approximately 100-foot bluff forming the east bank of the Wisconsin River. The Little Plover River is the only other stream found in the village. Scattered woodlands are found throughout Plover and these provide a habitat for small wildlife species and for white-tailed deer.

A dominant concern facing Plover is what to do about the possibility of contamination to the ground water supply. With the very porous "Friendship" sand and the closeness of the groundwater to the surface, Plover finds itself facing a very real nitrate infiltration problem. The problem is attributed to the use of

fertilizer in the surrounding agricultural areas.

As mentioned earlier, Plover's population in 1980 was 5,310. Population projections show an annual village growth rate for 1980 to the year 2000 to be 11.35 percent. The population projections for the year 2000 ranges from a low of 15,000 to a high of 19,715.

Reasons for Plover's rapid growth are varied. Around 1975 Plover became a popular suburban center to people who work in Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids. In addition to this, there have been a number of Corporations which have located in Plover in the 1970s. There were approximately 2000 jobs created in the Plover area during this period of time.

The Plover economy is centered around industries, trucking, agri-businesses, and service businesses. Retail businesses have just begun to emerge with several small shopping centers along with the Manufacturer's Direct Mall and Outlet Center. The largest employers within Plover include the Del Monte canning factory, Foremost Foods, Acorn Equipment

Have a Hobby? Or Collection? No Place to Show it Off?

If you have a hobby or collection you'd like to share, how about doing a demonstration for the Portage County Historical Society?

Whither your hobby is woodworking, caning, weaving, spinning, flaxing, or collecting, we'd love to hear from you. Please call Karen Zinda at 715/341-3398.

We have dates available from mid-June thru mid-August for either the Heritage Park or Synagogue sites.

Company, Roberts Irrigation, Okray Produce, Worzella Potatoes, Lila's Supermarket, Great American Basic Commodities, and the Stevens Point District Schools.

The rapid economic growth is attributable to a number of factors. The accessibility to highways and the railroad is one factor. The availability of large tracts of land with an ample groundwater supply is another factor. The potential for development as a result of the growth generated from the City of Stevens Point must also be considered. Plover's proximity to educational facilities such as the UW-Stevens Point and the vocational schools at Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids also play an important role.

The commercial and industrial growth in Plover have followed the transportation facilities. The general trend has been for commercial businesses to follow a north-south orientation by following Business Highway 51 (Post Road). The industrial areas have followed an east-west pattern by following the Green Bay & Western Railroad and County Highway B.

Plover provides a number of community facilities and services to its population. The Community Center houses the municipal offices, an activity center and the public protection agencies. There are over 100 acres of land which has been set aside as public parks. There are both "neighborhood" and "community-wide" parks in the village.

The Plover/Whiting Lions Club runs a very popular youth baseball and softball program for the youth. The Lions also own and run Lake Pacawa, which is the major recreational area for swimming.

Within Plover there are five churches, two cemeteries, and two elementary schools. It should also be mentioned that the Portage County Historical Society is developing a historical

park in the Village which includes the Old Methodist Church which will serve as a museum. There is also the old Catkins House on the square which is one of the oldest houses built in the county still standing today. The lot owned by the Portage County Historical Society is part of the original Plover Public Square.

Plover's Future

The future of Plover appears to be one of continued growth in terms of population, industries and commercial businesses. Plover faces problems in the future with ground-water contamination as well as controlled, planned growth. The Village Board must use strict guidelines in regulating the growth of Plover in order to preserve some of the beauty of the area. One of Plover's greatest challenges will be to maintain a high quality of life for those who chose to live there.

The End

THE SESSION MET REGULARLY

by
Mindy Borchardt

Five years ago, a history committee was formed at Frame Memorial Presbyterian Church to "do something with our history." This past November, with the generous help of Worzella Publishing, *The Session Met Regularly* was printed.

This historical narrative of Frame Memorial Church is based on the minutes of Session meetings between 1865 and 1980. It is also a tribute to those men and women of the church who, as the title states, "met regularly" to govern the church.

The story is told against a backdrop of Reconstruction, the First World War, the Depression years, the Second World War, and the societal changes of the 1960s.

Note these historical moments of Frame Memorial Presbyterian Church:

1865

The first year of our church was the last year of the Civil War. The initial entry recorded that: Pursuant to notice a meeting was held a two o'clock p.m. in the Presbyterian Church for the purpose of organizing the First Presbyterian Church of Stevens Point...Following the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the exercises were closed with the singing of "Rock of Ages" and the benediction.

1890

First Presbyterian was a growing church, and apparently a popular church, but Rev. Frame made it his personal crusade to keep each member of the congregation on a virtuous track. Session heard several cases of members accused of "conduct unbecoming a Christian." The accused had to either repent and renew their vows, or face dismissal.

1918

Rev. McLandress asked to be released for a year in order to serve in the Overseas War Service of the YMCA. His request was granted, and the free use of the manse was offered to his family. His application was made and accepted at about the time the Armistice was signed. Feeling that the urgent need of his services in this work was now past, he withdrew his application and decided to stay here.

1933

The budget was reduced again, to \$5,622. It appeared that funds would fall at least \$1,000 short. Rev. Shaver

suggested that it would probably be necessary for him to reduce his salary by an additional 25%, but Session decided not to do so just yet.

1953

From Elder "Doc" Masterson's address at the annual congregational meeting: We have a new pastor. We have a new manse. We'll have a new church organ. We have and will have many new members...We also have new responsibilities. We also have a new budget--bigger and better. We also have new obligations.

1967

Frame's support of the Day Care Center from its inception (and as the first licensed center in Portage County) was exemplary. The center was the dream of three community women--Grace Lensmire, Ruth Harris, and Frame member Shirley Gibb. They came before the Session, fielded the inevitable questions and concerns about working mothers, children away from their homes, and appropriateness of church involvement. On August 21, the Session approved the proposal of the Community Action Program Organization, under the chairmanship of Shirley Gibb, to use two basement rooms for the Day Care Center.

1969

Needless to say, the Vietnam War was an issue of grave importance during these years. The Session approved a request from Father Sullivan for a group of students concerned with Vietnam to hold a Memorial Worship Service in the sanctuary, to be open to the community. Elder Stielstra discussed draft counseling, reported that it existed for everyone in the

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:



Directions on back of Flyer

Plover Portage Rendezvous

community and was available upon request.

Frame history committee members Mark Makhholm, Mindy Borchardt, Mary Croft, Betty Davidson, and Dave Manske have gleaned the best of many volumes of handwritten records and files of photographs to produce this book. *The Session Met Regularly* was printed with generous assistance from Worzalla Publishing. Copies are available from the church for \$10.00.

This year's event is shaping up to be bigger and better than last year's! We have asked our re-enactors to demonstrate crafts, arts, and skills of the Fur Trade Era. So far, the response has been extremely encouraging. An ad will be placed in the Stevens Point Journal giving times of demonstrations.

Our Rendezvous has been listed in a

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



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
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