



Portage County Historical Society

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Tim Siebert, Editor

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President's Report

RENDEZVOUS

The 2nd Plover Portage Rendezvous was a great success. The society must thank a number of people for this success. Jerry Rohlinger and Ron "Coffeeman" Coker for their work in organizing the event. Mary Egle and Milo Harpstead were responsible for volunteer help and the physical layout of the park. Judy Siebert and Bob Precourt for their photographic work. We had help from a great many people and we wish to thank all of them.

The event drew over 1,000 visitors and about 25 re-enactor encampments. Plover McDonalds, Copps Corp, Anchor Bank, Northwood Realty, Point Trophy, Haferman & Ilten Law Offices contributed resources to the event.

We are now in the process of planning for our 3rd rendezvous next summer. We hope to expand the presentation with music offerings and, hopefully, a pastry offering.

FOUNDATION

The foundation remains over \$100,000 although the total has gone down about \$3,000 in the last several months because of the market fluctuations. This also includes several new life members. They are Mark Ilten, Cheryl Jean, Kari

Simonis, Peter Harvey, Dale Rindflisch and Marcia Ann Kuehl. We wish to thank the new life members for their investment in the preservation of our heritage.

NEEDS

1. We are still in need of a wet/dry style vacuum.
2. Any and all military related items- uniforms, patches, letters, homefront items or accouterments.
3. Any piece of Pink Depression Glass
4. Any T-shirt or cap that depicts some aspect of Portage County-events, business or sports.

PUBLISHING

The society is well on the way toward bringing out our new history of the county this November. The price will be

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\$40. If you wish to pre-order the book please send \$35 to the society's P.O. box. This will save you \$5 on the book. We also ask \$3.50 for shipping if you want the book mailed to you.

We are also in the process of publishing a book of the remembrances of Casmier Sikorski. Mr. Sikorski wrote some 5 dozen cameo stories about life in the first half of the century in rural Portage County. He had a great deal of insight and humor. We hope to have the book out sometime next year.

We wish to thank Mr. Roy Menzel for his gift of a 100 copies of his book *Home town on the River* for the society to sell. We also have several copies of John Anderson's post card collection book. These can also be purchased from the society.

If you wish to purchase any of our other books please contact us at the society address.

GIFTS FROM OUR FRIENDS

1. Steve Bogaczyk -- a large collection of military items from his father Louis.
2. Diane Lavin -- a number of medical items from the office of a local doctor
3. Henry Korger -- a number of items related to photography.

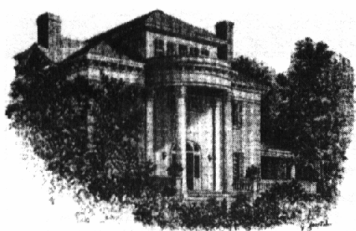
4. David Cash -- several early 1950's radios and repair parts of radios.
5. Bill Konezcki -- two metal milk cases with bottles (old school lunch style)
6. Carla Boettcher -- mid 19th Century oil burning lamp.
7. Dr. Iber — Several boxes of items from his office.

Andrew Was My Uncle
by
Palmer Myhra
January 1995

Part 2

Andrew liked animals and was especially good with horses. He liked to work with a good team of horses. He never wanted to stay overnight at any place he worked so one would have to go get him and take him home again at night. It not too far away, he would walk. He liked some of the people he worked for and always spoke well of Ed Zdroik and Earl Olson. He liked driving a tractor once he learned how and would sit so erect and

South Wood County Historical Corporation



540 Third Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
715-423-1580
E-mail museum@wctc.net
www.swch-museum.com

Schedule of Events

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| May 3 | Museum open for the season, Sunday - Thursday 1 - 4 PM |
| Sept. 26 - Oct. 15 | School Tours |
| Sept. 30 | Last day museum open for visitor season |
| Dec. 2-4; 9-11; 16-18 | Christmas Gift Shop open, Thursday & Friday 1 - 5 PM Saturday 10 - 3 PM |

careful when driving that Don Carter always said, "He is the only person I've ever seen that drives at attention", a military term. After the tornado destroyed the shed my brother, Norman, built him a small shack which he lived in for several years and liked it very much. He helped Herbert and Elsie Hartwig and would walk up through the woods to get there. He liked kids and Herbert's boys got along well with him.

Andrew if he would vote for him. Andrew said, "No! I voted once in my life and will never vote again. I voted for Wilson in 1916 to keep us out of War and a few months later I was in the trenches in France. So, I'll never vote for anyone again." Norman won the election, anyhow.

When Andrew had too much to drink, he liked to sing. "Turkey in the Straw", was his favorite tune. He, of course, always got going on the man going to the moon idea and about all the money he had buried, which we have not yet found. He liked to read about military and scientific things. He really was interested in the Moon and Stars. I remember he used to carry around some rather odd piece of rock which he claimed he found from a meteor, which fell one night. I think now he probably did get them that way, although no one believed him then. I don't know what happened to those odd rocks, but they probably went in the tornado. He liked to discuss atomic energy and called it "Tomic" energy. Andrew basically was very intelligent and I sometimes wonder what he could have been with an education and ambition.

He never wore glasses, except to read. He had an old pair of reading glasses for that. He never went to a dentist and had all his teeth when he died, but they wore way down from chewing Copenhagen for almost 80 years. Bacteria could not live with that so he never had decay or toothaches. As he got older, he couldn't

hear real well. He wouldn't consider a hearing aid and blamed it on the loud shell explosion during the War.

A story about Andrew was told to me by Ed Dobbe, who was of a good mind at 93. Shortly after World War 1, Andrew got in a big argument with Grandpa, who kicked him out of the house. It seemed they had been digging a well so Andrew crawled down in there to live, like in a cave. Some of the neighbors thought Andrew must be made crazy to live like that, especially when combined with his drinking of the moonshine. Those days probably would have made a person a little crazy anyhow and Andrew knew how to make up his own recipe of that. Some people got up a petition to the County Judge to have Andrew committed to the Insane Asylum. At the hearing some testified as to why Andrew was probably insane. Then, the Judge asked Andrew to tell his story. Andrew said, "Just a few years ago I was over in France in the trenches standing in water and mud up to my knees. Now, I am living in a nice dry cave with a roof over my head and people think I am crazy. I am just doing what I want to do and am not bothering anybody. At least, when I stick my head out nobody shoots at me". the Judge said, "Case Dismissed, Andrew go home."

About the last 10 years of his life, Andrew lived with my Mother. That's when I got to know him better. She was his guardian so he wouldn't squander his pension, which she managed to get for him. He liked to go, but he always wanted to ride in the back seat as he considered that safer. When they went to town, my Mother would give him a dollar. He would go to a bar and get a little drunk. It always puzzled her how he got so drunk on only a dollar. Seems everybody liked old Andrew and bought him a few drinks. And, he often never even spent the dollar. One

time my Mother and my Aunt Lydia, who also tried to tell Andrew what to do, couldn't find Andrew when they were ready to go home. So they went into some of the taverns looking for him. They were quite embarrassed when coming out of one place, they met the minister. Andrew said, "serves them right for sticking their nose in my business. "

My Mother was always trying to get him to stop drinking, but that was a hopeless effort. My bother, Clarence, and his boys, Larry and Ron, must remember well when Andrew took them out behind the old hog house and showed them where he kept his beer. There was a nest of snakes there, and he knew she wouldn't look there.

One time I took my Son-in Law, David to meet Andrew. We arrived there in the evening; Andrew was already in bed. We went to his room. He was awake sitting up in bed and shone a flashlight in David's face and said, "You a Saw Filer?". "No", David said, trying to explain who he was. No argument, "You're the Saw Filer." End of discussion. David's red beard and red flannel shirt must have reminded him of someone from back in the lumberjack days. David only met Andrew once, but it is an example of another person who will not forget such a character.

We always enjoyed going to Andrews birthday as he got older. On his 90th birthday as we got ready to leave, he said to me, "If you're still living next year, come again." He was always joking and turning things around. I made it, but he did not.

On the day after his 90th birthday, Andrew asked my Mother, "What ever happened to Bessie?" She was the girl friend he once had. She told him of how she had married this one fellow. "How did that go" he asked. My mother told him that the fellow had died and that she had married another man. "How did that go",

he asked. After a few years he died, too. Andrew thought for a while then said "good thing I never married her, or I'd be dead, too". End of discussion.

Andrew was never a religious man. He never belonged to a church or went to one. I think he was baptized, but never went beyond that. He did read the Bible some and had his own ideas about that and often made reference to "the Old Man up there". He never seemed to worry that he might die, but had a goal of living to 114. If anyone tried to get him to go to any senior citizen or retirement person's activities he would not go as he considered that only for old people. I think Andrew enjoyed his life as much as anyone. He had a lot of bad experiences, but made a joke of most of it, as a rule he did just about as he pleased and really didn't care what anyone thought about it.

In February of 1983, Andrew suddenly started to have problems, but my Mother could not get him to go see a Doctor. Finally, I was able to convince him to go if Lois and I would take him. He had never been to a Doctor in his life, except for the Army physical. Rather reluctantly, he threw his cane in the car and got in for the trip to see Dr. Benn. We waited as he checked over Andrew and we could hear him telling the Doctor that there wasn't anything wrong, except he was sure someone had put something in his Copenhagen. Finally, the Doctor came out and told us Andrew had a bad case of Congestive Heart Failure and his condition was so serious that he should be in the hospital. Andrew didn't want to go just because someone had put something in his Copenhagen, but finally gave in and said he would go if we went with him. We then went to the hospital in Stevens Point. He must have known it was getting toward the end, but still he could joke about it.

They wanted him to get in a wheel chair, but he wanted to walk in. The nurse insisted and he finally got into one. Then turned to the nurse and said, "have you got a driver's license for this thing?"

The next day we went to see him. We asked the nurse how he was doing. She said not too good, but pretty good for a 100 year old man. "Who told you he was 100?", I asked. "He did", she said. I told her he must have said he was almost 100 and liked to say he was born right after Lincoln died. About 2 days later, I went to see him again. He was sleeping, but woke up to speak to me for a minute. When went back to sleep. The next morning he died.

My Mother, over the years, had saved enough out of his pensions for a nice funeral. He never would have worried about that. When I went to the funeral home to see Andrew. I had to smile to myself as I looked at him and thought of what had happened to him and that he had made it over 90 years. My first thought was, Andrew, if you had known you would live so long, you would have taken better care of yourself. It happened that the regular pastor from my church was on vacation, so it was necessary for a seminary student, Rex Brandt who was called on for the funeral service. It was his first funeral and he did an excellent job, which Andrew would have agreed. It was good to see that so many came to pay their respects to Andrew and almost all the nieces and nephews were there also. As I remember it, one of Herbert's sons, who was now in the National Guard, came with his uniform on. I asked him, Why the uniform?" He said, "Because Andrew would have liked that". With that I agree. He was buried in the Halton Cemetery near Weyauwega, where some of his brothers and sisters are buried as well as his parents and grandparents. 90 years, 6 months and 15 days, and as I said before, "if he had know he would live so long".



My Mother received the flag for Andrew. When she went to the Nursing Home in 1992, we had to disperse everything in her home. At this time, I knew they needed a flag in the Iola High School gym, so Andrew's Flag always gets a lot of attention before every basketball game.

When the grave marker from the Veterans Administration came, it had a mistake in the engraving so I insisted they take it back, and put the correct information on it. The old soldier, as he called himself, would not rest easy if it were not right. There are many that will not forget Uncle Andrew.

Taps

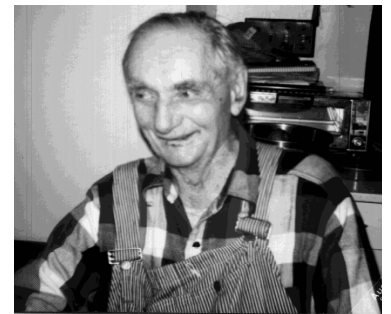
Day is done, gone the sun from the lake
from the hill, from the sky.

All is well, safely rest - God is neigh
thanks and praise for our days

'Neath the sun,

'Neath the moon & stars

thanks and praise for
our days



'Neath the sun,

'Neath the moon & stars

'Neath the sky.

As we go, this we know -- God is neigh

The Legend of The Buggy

by
Jerry Rohlinger



It was on a clear evening of June 9, 1999 that the Board of Directors of the Portage County Historical Society gathered with spouses and a few offspring for their annual repast at the Heritage Park. A turkey grilled by Mr. Rohlinger, supplied by Mr. Anday, provided the main course. The gathered throng quickly consumed the golden brown bird and the excellent side dishes and desserts brought by the others. Only one thing remained to be accomplished that evening, the monthly meeting. Or so we thought!

Then out of the recesses of President Tim Siebert's fertile mind came the dreaded remembrance! An artifact of significant size required repositioning at the Park. Our gracious Lord, Tim, had again, conjured up a new project, to be carried out forthwith, without discussion or debate. His Lordship declaring so all his obsequious followers near at hand could hear. "The Buggy currently stored in the Bancroft Depot's freight room, had to be moved to the Museum". His Lordship further declared, "that this object would fit through the double doors of the museum without any effort."

Three unsuspecting individuals, misfortunate enough to be standing near His Lordship, were drafted for this task. Milo Harpstead, Jerry Rohlinger, and John Zinda, spouse of Most Honorable Scribe Karen, stepped forward to do battle with the monstrous black thing!

After 15 minutes of sweating, grunting, maneuvering, and silently cursing, The Buggy issued forth. The Bancroft Depot's freight room had surrendered its captive of nearly a year! His Lordship and three minions playfully wheeled The Buggy toward the museum anticipating an effortless conclusion to

their task.

Arriving at the entrance to the hallowed museum, His Lordship and his three minions lifted The Buggy, carried it up the steps toward the gaping maw, and it didn't fit! Having been involved with the creation of a previous legend, The Safe, I immediately began recalling the unmentionable, hurtful things we had hoped would inflict His Lordship would re-inflict him. After much glowering at His Lordship for yet another miscalculation, we retreated down the steps carrying The Buggy to survey the problem. After several minutes of consternation, a voice of reason was heard. Young Amy, offspring of aforementioned cook, said, "Turn it on its side." All agreed this was the only reasonable method of inserting The Buggy into the museum.

The Buggy not weighing more than His Lordship (previously determined in anticipation of a possible lynching) we were able to flip it on its side. Then Milo voiced a concern "don't pick it up by its wheels"! This sobering pronouncement led to a more conservative approach to just thrusting The Buggy into the gaping maw.

This vehicle with four-foot high wheels, was not designed for easy grasping while on its side. After several minutes of fumbling around we elevated the monster up the stairs, through the door, and set it on its side inside the museum. Another unforeseen obstacle reared its ugly head! His Lordship had "misjudged" the space allotted to right the buggy! Again, evil hurtful thoughts raced through our minds! A mighty effort righted the buggy although a highly noticeable scrape was left on the museum's pristine floor as a reminder of our efforts. The four of us stood sweating, thankful of our task's successful completion. When through the gaping maw



strode none other then, Anton!

Having been a victim of the Safe, he had been amused by our pathetic efforts. But then! Observing the hideous gash on the floor, his nostrils began to flare! Lightning bolts flashed from his eyes! His Lordship immediately assumed a non-confrontational posture. Almost whimpering. The new arrival stated that HE would remove the GASH! And our presence was no longer desired!

Thus, ended another Legend in the ever growing collection of Siebert's Follies.

Handicap access ramp to the Museum has been rebuilt.

We have just received notice of a \$5,000 grant from the Consolidated Papers Foundation for the platform on the north side of the depot. This gives us sufficient funds to complete the exterior of the depot and perhaps the chimney. Lumber will be ordered and work will begin soon. Hopefully, if lumber arrives and weather

Progress Update

This summer the Franklin House saw work continue on the upstairs rooms. The handyman room and Maurice Perret's Office were completed. This leaves just two rooms to be completed.

The Mill has been repainted. Plans are being made for replacement of windows next years.

Coming Soon!

The History of Portage

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

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