

## Inside this issue:

Rabbi Matzner	Page 2
Franklin Calkins House	Page 3
Civil War	Page 5
Horse Drawn Implements	Page 6

# The Pinery



## The Caravan

By Milo Harpstead

The Engford Circus Caravan was built by the grandfather of Ruthie Engford Clark and was used as the mobile home for the Engfords when they were on the road during the 1930s and 40s. It was built on the chassis of a Model T Ford and was remarkably well engineered in order to retain its shape and integrity while being towed over all kinds of roads. The interior shows efficiency of space to take care of storage of all the things that the family needed for extended periods.

The caravan had undergone considerable weathering from several years of disuse. In 2009 a project to restore it was undertaken. The tires had long since rotted away and a new pair of tires and tubes were provided by the Schierl Tire Company. We installed them on the rims and fitted them to the newly painted wheels. Arrangements were made for Sam Miller, an Amish man living near Wautoma, to replace the canvas roof covering, so we hauled the caravan to him and brought it back when completed.



The biggest part of the restoration project was the preparation of the metal surface and the application of the paint. All of this was contributed by Dave's Body Shop. The gutters above all the windows and the door were rusted out, so new ones were formed and donated by the Kleenaire Corp. They were installed at the time the orange trim was being painted. Don Jockman donated the hitch.

The interior walls and attached units were cleaned, repaired and painted, as were the camp stoves and ductwork. Sherwin-Williams contributed the paint. The linoleum was donated, and installed at a reduced price by Troy Aeby of Duralum. This much of the restoration project was completed by the summer of 2010, but it was not ready for display until the very attractive sign painting was completed on each side of the caravan. This work was done by Don Gilbert at a reduced price. With this, the caravan was ready to take its place as a major item in the Engford Circus display in 2011.

*Milo Harpstead, Board Member of the PCHS, lead the initiative to restore the caravan, and saw it through to its fruition. Ed.*

# The Dinery

## Rabbi David Jacob Matzner

By Mark Seiler



Rabbi Matzner reading from the Megillah, the book of Esther

In Fall of 1953 David Matzner became Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Stevens Point. Born in 1914 in Wiesbaden, Germany, he completed his rabbinical studies in Jerusalem in 1938 and returned to Germany to look after his aged parents. His arrival in Wiesbaden coincided with *Kristallnacht*, November 9-10 1938, when the Nazis plundered Jewish businesses and homes and set more than 1500 synagogues ablaze. He and his family fled to Belgium where they found sanctuary for nearly a year, until the German invasion. David then fled to southern, unoccupied France where he was captured by French collaborators who sent him to Germany and ultimately to Auschwitz concentration camp. He was a slave laborer in Fürstengrube and Gross-Rosen sub camps until his liberation in 1945. Although he had survived, most of his family members perished in the Holocaust. After his immigration to the United States in 1950, Rabbi Matzner went to Spokane, Washington, and in 1953 to his first full time congregation, in Stevens Point.

At Beth Israel he continued the busy schedule of his predecessors. Sundays he had a 15 minute radio program on WSPT followed by Sunday school. Monday afternoon was Hebrew religious school for younger children. Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons was Hebrew religious school for older children. Friday was the 9:15 pm Shabbat service at the Synagogue and Saturday morning Shabbat services for parents and children. He of course officiated at weddings, funerals and Bar Mitzvahs, and officiated at the first Bat Mitzvah ceremony in the history of the congregation, when Carol Ann Lipman, Marcia Janice Karp, Alayne Bonnie Rudnick, and Carol Lana Garber became Bat Mitzvah in 1955.

In the city Rabbi Matzner continued the activities of his predecessors who had been deeply involved in community and inter-faith events. He addressed various service organizations such as the Rotarians, and became a member of the *Stevens Point Committee for World Order*, which was formed to promote better understanding between the peoples of the world and to support the United Nations. He organized a yearlong series of events commemorating the 300th anniversary of the arrival of Jews in America, which included an exhibit in the Parish Hall of the Episcopal

Church and a program at Central State Teachers College (CSTC, now UWSP) featuring Stevens Point Mayor Leonard Sorenson, CTSC President William C. Hanson, Father Edward Lewis of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Gordon Meyer of Frame Memorial Presbyterian Church, Rev. Perry Saito of St. Paul's Methodist Church, and the CSTC choir singing various pieces in Hebrew.

Because of his own experiences in Nazi concentration camps, it is not surprising that he conducted a special service on a Friday evening in 1955 to commemorate the destruction of the Warsaw Jewish ghetto in 1943, to pray for its Jewish victims, and to eulogize another Jewish refugee, Albert Einstein.

Rabbi Matzner is pictured holding a Torah he brought from Germany.



Matzner's father had saved this Torah from being burnt during the *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. The

(Continued on page 4)

# The Dinery

## The Franklin/Calkins House Painting Project

By Anton Anday

An unanticipated cost for this project was the replacement of the rotted siding. We do not know how long the siding of 1982 was in place. At the time of acquisition, the building has been unpainted for several decades. Some of the remaining paint chips indicated that at the last painting the building was green. In 1983, after scraping, caulking and priming the building, it was painted white. The building did not hold this coat of paint for long. After about six years, it was painted yellow with a maroon trim. This coat of paint lasted longer than the first attempt, but within eight years it needed repainting. The previous procedure was then duplicated and after the tenth year it was painted white again. By 2008 it was obvious that repainting and roofing was necessary in order to save the building.

The original intent of the project was painting. The generosity of the Norman Worzella family and Worzella Family Farms, as well as others, allowed us to think that replacing the roof might be a possibility. When the Golden Sands Builders Association generously offered to donate the labor for the roofing project, that hope became a reality.

As the building was cleaned, it became obvious that much of the siding on the north and east side of the building was not salvageable. The choice: go ahead and paint, then repaint in seven to eight years, or replace the siding, then paint and secure the building for the foreseeable future. Even though the cost would create a budget overrun, the later choice was made.

We know that the roof is guaranteed for the next fifty years. We know that the painting, with maintenance will last at least ten years, after which we will have to monitor some of the existing older siding. We may have to replace some and repaint the building later. The five thousand dollar budgetary overrun on this project was a good long term decision for this building, which preserves the culture and heritage of this community.

## Fire House Update

The Society is pleased to announce that bids for the Fire House roof from Coyote Construction LLC (metal roofing) and Stud Brothers Construction LLC. have been accepted for work on the roof, bell tower base construction of the bell tower, and repair of the soffit and fascia. Work is scheduled to be done this fall. Our thanks to those who donated already to this project, most notably the Seramur Family Foundation and the Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR) Special Projects Grant, and as this is only the first phase for the building donations are still being accepted to complete the other phases. Donations may be sent to Karen Zinda, PCHS Secretary, 1880 Pine Bluff Rd., Stevens Point WI 54481

The PCHS now has a presence on the ever popular social web site Facebook.

Created a short while back, the society's page has started to build a list of followers. Plans for the page include listing announcements, promoting events, general news and more (including some photos).

You can visit our page by searching Facebook for the Portage County Historical Society.

Help us spread the word by telling your Facebook "friends" about our site!

(Rabbi Matzner continued from page 2)

Torah was smuggled into Switzerland and returned to Wiesbaden after the war where Rabbi Matzner reopened a burnt out synagogue in 1946, the first in post war Germany.

In his personal life David Matzner was a student at Central State Teachers College and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in June 1955. In attendance at a graduation reception at the Matznors were CSTC faculty members, local clergy, members of Beth Israel, and other friends. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jenkins and family presented Rabbi Matzner with a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence.

In August 1955 Matzner announced that he would be leaving Congregation Beth Israel to become Rabbi at Mt. Sinai Congregation in Wausau, where he remained until 1963. He then served congregations in Waterloo, Iowa and Washington, Pennsylvania before retiring in 1978. In 1980 Rabbi Matzner and his wife settled in Florida where he served a congregation, was chaplain in hospitals in Fort Lauderdale, and volunteered many hours counseling and helping the needy.

Sadly, the Matznors, who had lost most family members in the Holocaust, lost their family a second time. Their younger, eight month old son Sidney died in 1956 and their older son Gary, a medical student at Brandeis University, died in an automobile accident in 1971. Rabbi Matzner passed away in 1986 and was buried in Israel. His wife, who died in 1991 included in her will a provision to publish her husband's memoirs, which describe his life in the concentration camps--*Der Muselmann: The Diary of a Jewish Slave Laborer*, KTAV Publishing House, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, 1994.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

We wish to thank all those that helped us make Heritage Days a success this year. Despite the hot weather many braved the heat to see the changes and new displays at Heritage Park.

As in the past several years Ruth Engford Clark and Frank Clark were on hand to talk to visitors. They also added a number of new items to the house displays.

Milo Harpstead added five newly rehabilitated farm equipment pieces. These pieces drew a good many people to his discussion of the implements.

Justin and Lynn Isherwood must also be thanked for the agricultural equipment that they have given to the society to enhance our displays.

The Franklin House now has a new roof and coat of paint. The house also needed a great deal of new siding which was also replaced.

The Engford house has also seen a new roof put on. The last building in Heritage Park to need work, our general store, has begun to see its outside siding worked on. The east and south sides will be completed this summer with the other two sides to see work next year. The Yellowstone Cabin has also been completed on the inside. A 1920's/30's style display has been set up to portray a couple moving cross country.

The society does have several needs. We have lost one dehumidifier and are in need of two such machines. The cost is about \$250. Anyone interested in helping with this please send funds to Portage County Historical Society, P.O.

672, Stevens Point, WI 54481. We are also in need of archival supplies. The items we purchase come from Gaylord Brothers of New York. The items include photo negative boxes (\$13 each), file folders (\$35 per 100), clothing boxes (from \$15 to \$35 each depending on the size). We have received \$2750 for this project to date. This amounts to about 1/4 of what is needed to house most of our collections. Anyone interest in helping us purchase one or more of these items please send funds to the address mentioned above. Thank you for whatever you are able to forward to the society.

*Tim Siebert*

## SYNAGOGUE NOTES

The Synagogue Museum is open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4pm. Visitors continue to come to the Museum, even on the oppressively hot weekends we have experienced this Summer. More than 170 (15 per weekend) visitors came thus far from 17 cities in Wisconsin, including Stevens Point, Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids, Schofield and surrounding towns, as well as Wauwatosa, Milwaukee, and Madison. Other visitors came from out of state: OR, AK, MN, NY, PA, TX, CA and IL. We even had two visitors from Russia. One of our visitors from New York surprised us with a very generous donation which will enable us to replace the seriously deteriorating front steps. Thank you! We will report on this when this project is completed.

## 2011 Civil War Encampment

By Dave Simonis

One hundred and fifty years ago an event that changed America and pitted brother-against-brother started: the Civil War. Portage County, and more specifically Plover, was a hot-bed for recruitment activity and boasted the greatest number of enlistees for a town its size in our state. Many notable citizens and family members served time in the effort against the South, with loss of life and limb. A quick visit to any of the older cemeteries locally and one can find headstones denoting those who served. In addition, the GAR memorial dedicated to their service still remains across from our current courthouse on Church Street in Stevens Point.

This August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> marks the dates of our annual Civil War Encampment. It will be held once again on the banks of the Wisconsin River at Pffner Pioneer Park located near downtown Stevens Point. As in years past, re-enactors will be dressed in period Union and Confederate uniforms while recreating a living history of army-camp life and performing live cannon firings and infantry drills. In addition to returning favorites, new groups this year include McAllister's Battery (Confederate) and an embalmer and wife duo demonstrating tools and techniques of the period (Deb and Tim Angers, whom some of you may recognize as the widower and embalmer from the Society's annual Halloween event at Heritage Park). We will also be featuring special children's activities and music by the Grenadiers. Food

and beverages will be available on the grounds including the best kettle corn and lemonade this side of the equator! Spectacular night cannon firings will be held Saturday evening at dusk and are an annual must-see.

The event was started by PCHS member Sam Solberg in 2006. For those of you who know Sam, he is also a re-enactor and will be in attendance. This year the PCHS formed an encampment event committee with Sam (Solberg), Julie Richards and me (Dave Simonis) on board.



With less funding available (in the past we have received a grant from the Stevens Point room tax, which was not available to us this year) we have asked local businesses for sponsorships. We would like to acknowledge the sponsors onboard at the time of publication and hope you can give them a word of thanks for their support on your next visit: *R-stores aka Riiser Energy* (convenience stores), *Polito's Pizza*, *Call It New Antique* (consignment and antique store), *Trig's Grocery*, *The Point Brewery*, *Mitchell's Hill Top Pub*, *Lee Ayers Jewelers*, *Café 27* and *The Main Grain* (bakery). Look for recognition of any new or additional sponsors on the event grounds during the encampment.

If you'd like more information or to help by becoming a sponsor or volunteer at the event – please call Dave Simonis at (715) 341-8638.

*Your presence is requested at:*

### *A Victorian Funeral at Heritage Park.*

*The Franklin House has been prepared for the honoring of a loved one and you are invited to pay your respects.*

*Saturday, October 29, 2011  
1–3 p.m.*

*Franklin House in  
Heritage Park,  
Corner of  
Washington & Willow in  
Plover Wisconsin.*

*Admission \$1.00*



Children can trick or treat at the park's 10 buildings during the same time and all are welcome at the Engford House for a Bake Sale Extraordinaire!

# The Dinery

## Horse-drawn Implements Added in 2011

by Milo Harpstead

Five additional horse-drawn imple-



ments have been restored and presented for display at the Heritage Days this year. My favorite piece and the most colorful is the Dowagiac grain drill. It has some interesting features such as the instrument that keeps a running tally of the acres of grain seeded. It was donated by Barbara and Gary Bor-ski and re-quired several months of restoration. They also donated a dump style hay rake that is quite attractive with its fresh coat of International Harvester paint colors.



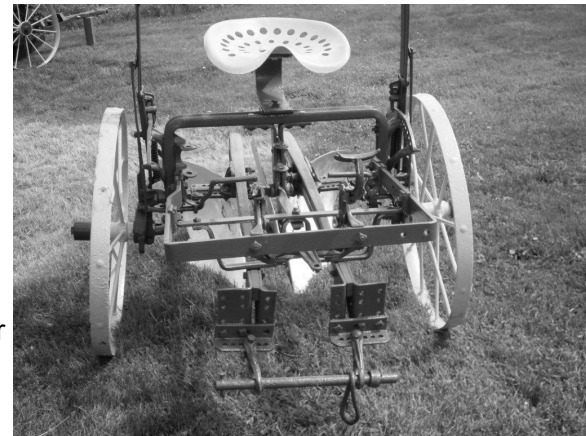
We now have two pieces of antique potato implements.

The one that attracted the most attention from the press is the IHC one row potato planter, but it came from the Hancock, WI area in poor condition. It is quite complex in the way that chunks of seed potatoes are picked up and dropped off behind the furrow opener and covered in a hill by coulters at the rear of the machine. Its

original colors are red, white and blue freshly applied. The other potato implement is a Hoover one row potato digger. We already had one in worse condition, but it contributed parts for the completed finished product. It is interesting how

many people — men and women — in our area told about their experience of bagging potatoes picked off the ground by one of these implements.

The other horse-drawn implement



that we added this year is what I call a two way plow. It has two bottoms. One of them throws the soil to the left on the other to the right. It was designed for small fields with irregular boundaries such as in northern Wisconsin. Only one bottom was lowered at a time to plow a furrow. When the end of the field was reached, the farmer turned the team around, lowered the other bottom and continued plowing in the furrow that had just been made by the bottom which was not lifted. This implement was contributed by our own John and Karen Zinda.





# Portage County Historical Society

PO Box 672  
Stevens Point WI 54481

Phone: 715-344-4423  
E-mail: portagecnywhistsoc@gmail.com  
www.pchswi.org

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #92  
Stevens Point  
Wisconsin

Tim Siebert—President  
Mark Seiler—Vice President  
Karen J. Zinda—Secretary  
Jeanne Regnier—Treasurer

Return service  
requested

## Board Members

Jim Abberderis	Anton Anday
Patty Becker	Mary Egle
Milo Harpstead	Merida Houser
Don Kottke	Shirley Multhauf
Julie Richards (volunteer coordinator)	Jerry Rohlinger (webmaster)
Dave Simonis	Sam Solberg
Beverly West	

The Pinery, A publication of the Portage County Historical Society  
Karen Zinda and Mark Seiler, Editors  
Masthead Design by Jessie Michelson



## How to read your mailing label

Like all non-profits we have had decreased or lost funding over the past year - funding which has always helped us to operate our four sites in Portage County: Heritage Park in Plover, The Rising Star Mill in Nelsonville, Beth Israel Synagogue Museum and Historic Fire House N<sup>o</sup> 2 in Stevens Point. That's why we ask that you read the codes on your mailing label, and if it says "donor" consider making another donation this year, if it says "complimentary" - consider joining, if it says "elected official" - well ... support us in every way you can, if it says "life", you have made a one time payment large enough to entitle you to this designation, however, continued support is always welcomed, if it says "Jan-11" it means your annual dues are due and we appreciate your continued support (dues run on the calendar year ((Jan-Jan))).

Thank you for your investment in Portage County's history. Together we can keep growing the Portage County Historical Society.

Thank You for your Continued Support!

## Calendar of Events

August 20  
Bill and Kate Isles Concert, Rising Star Mill, Nelsonville

August 27 & 28  
Civil War Encampment at Piffner Pioneer Park downtown Stevens Point

September 16  
Free movie night, Rising Star Mill, Nelsonville

September 30, October 1 & 2  
Barns of Portage County Display, Rising Star Mill, Nelsonville

October 29  
Victorian Funeral/Halloween at Heritage Park, corner of Washington & Willow, Plover

Last weekend in October (Pending)  
Haunted House, Rising Star Mill, Nelsonville