

Official Publication of the Portage County Historical Society of Wisconsin

Kachel's Combined Circus

In December 2013 the Society received a donation from Philip and Susan Pelanek of Middleton, Wisconsin. The "Kachel's Combined Circus" is a miniature, 1/4-inch scale, circus display of the Ringling Brothers Circus. It was donated to us on the recommendation of Tim Tegge owner of Tegge Circus Archives and long time friend of Ruthie (Engford) and Frank Clark. The Pelaneks donated the collection to the Society with the understanding that we would not break up the collection.

Clarence and Mae Kachel were real circus enthusiasts. They began assembling the display in 1937. Included in the display are over 800 figures of people; hundreds of animal figures; a Lionel circus train; big top tents (all made by Mrs. Kachel). The collection as displayed in their attic included piped in circus music as well as lighting! They were members of the Circus Fans Association of America serving as state officers.

Also included as part of the collection were the Kachels' Christmas cards received from many famous clowns and other circus people. This collection will be displayed online in the near future.



While we did receive this collection in time to put on display during our second year of our 2-year Circus History display, because of space limitations only part of the circus could be placed on display. As displayed in their attic it was approximately 20-feet long!

Thanks to Tim Siebert's 'creative' space saving, he has been able to clear enough space at Heritage Park to now display the entire collection.



Society Events

Wednesday April 8th, Annual Meeting, 7:00 PM at the Moose Family Center, 1025 N 2nd St., Stevens Point. Use Bingo/Banquet Entrance. Betsy Kerlin, Executive Director of the North Central Conservancy Trust, will be our guest speaker.

Saturday May 9th, Portage County Cultural Festival. Held at SPASH. We'll have tables. Stop by and talk to us!

Saturday, June 13th, 1 p.m. at the Synagogue Museum. Laura Keyes as Laura Ingalls Wilder - Prairie Schoolteacher. Free admission.

Sunday, June 14th, 2:00 p.m. at The Cottage Café, 2900 Post Rd, Plover Wi 54467, "Tea with Mrs. Lincoln" with Laura Keyes as Mary Todd Lincoln. Cost: \$18.00 per person - reservations required. Make Checks payable to: PCHS. Mail to: M. Houser, 1801 April Lane, Stevens Point Wi 54481. Or call

(Continued on page 2)



President's Report

The last few months has seen a great deal of work being put in by the society. In December the board decided to bring Santa Claus to the Strongs Ave. fire house. The event saw a large number of children and their parents visit Santa during his brief stay in the city. The event was a big success. Thanks to John Zinda for his portrayal of Santa.

This past summer saw the wrap up of our two year circus display at the church/museum in Heritage Park. The next two years will see an exhibit of our large doll collection. A major portion of the society's doll collection comes from the donations of Joyce Slack. Our plan is to open the doll display on Memorial Day. Anyone interested in contributing to the society collection would be greatly appreciated.

The circus theme was very popular and, as a result, we have decided to create a permanent display in the balcony area of the church/museum. To that end Mr. Anday has been working at creating an area in the balcony to display the miniature circus and elements of our Franzen Brothers Circus collection. A number of items on display in that area have been relocated. The walls have been repainted and some carpentry work done to accommodate the new display. Mrs. Anday also needs thanks for her work in helping to paint both the balcony and the entrance area of the museum. Mr. Tim Tegge, circus historian and performer, has contributed a number of Franzen items from his personal collection and donated time to help set up the display at the museum.

Heritage Days will be held during the first weekend this June. The society board has decided to bring Mr. Tegge out to the park to put on his performance on both Saturday and Sunday. Ruthie Engford and Frank Clark will again be able to come and share their circus stories with our visitors.

Members of the society were also able to have a booth at the Arctic

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 1)

1.424.680.9987 or email:
PCHS.events@gmail.com

Synagogue

1475 Water St., Stevens Point
Open Memorial Day to
Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-344-4423

Friday, April 10, The Portage Co. Hist. Society is hosting a Friday evening Shabbat service at 7:30pm on April 10 at Temple Beth Israel Synagogue Museum, 1475 Water St. In the Jewish tradition, the Sabbath is sundown Friday to nightfall Saturday. Rabbi Dan Danson of Mt. Sinai Congregation, Wausau, will officiate. The public is welcome at this religious service.

Saturday, June 13th, 1 p.m. at the Synagogue. Laura Keyes as Laura Ingalls Wilder. - Prairie Schoolteacher. Free admission.

Historic Fire House No. 2

1949 Strongs Ave, Stevens Point
Open Memorial Day to
Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-344-4423

2015 Events have not been set.

Heritage Park

Corner of Washington & Willow
Plover
Open Memorial Day to

(Continued on page 3)



Timothy Noel Tegge, a third-generation showman and performer, was born and raised in the circus. He first donned clown makeup at age three, appearing with his father, also a clown at the time, in a parade. That was all it took to ignite a lifelong love affair with the world of sawdust and spangles. By the time he was five years old, Timothy was applying his own makeup and performing in the ring of the family-owned TNT & Royal Olympic Circus. Now, fifty years later, Tegge can still be seen in the spotlight of some of the nation's largest circus productions--sometimes as a clown, often an illusionist, and more regularly as the ringmaster and performance director--traveling several months every year across the U.S. and Canada.



(Continued from page 2)

Run model railroad show this past January. The purpose of the booth was to both discuss with visitors the Pierce barn project and to market our books. Both seemed to have been a success. Members will, again, man a booth at the Portage County Cultural Fest this coming May with the purpose of marketing our published materials and, as above, talk about the Pierce barn project.

On the second weekend in June (see "Dates to Remember" sidebar) the society is planning a unique set of two programs for the general public. Laura Keyes will be portraying Laura Ingalls Wilder on Saturday and Mrs. Lincoln on Sunday. The first event will take place at the Synagogue and will be free to anyone wishing to share this unique experience. The second event will be a Tea with Mrs. Lincoln to be held at the Cottage Cafe in Plover. Tickets will be necessary for this event. We hope that you will be able to join us for both of these presentations.

The Pierce Barn project is moving ahead at a good pace. To date nearly \$40,000 has been raised for this project. The project is still, roughly, \$60,000 short of the necessary amount to begin the construction of the Pierce Barn. As many of you already know the project is under a two year restriction that began last July. If the society fails to raise the necessary amount of funds we must either start the whole process over again or, simply, give up the idea of an agricultural area. Agriculture is Portage County's largest single industry. It is also an untold story in this area. It is a complicated story that needs to be told so as to understand more about how people living here arrived at where we are now.

The board of the society held a retreat on Feb. 28. The plan was to look at where the members of the board think the society ought to be after the next 5 to 10 years. It is our hope that we can lay out a road map for the organization for that period of time.

The society's annual meeting will take place on April 8th at the Moose Family Center, 1025 N 2nd St., Stevens Point (Use Bingo/Banquet Entrance) beginning at 7:00. The meeting will involve elections for several board positions. Anyone interested in joining the board please contact us at our P.O. Box 672 or at our telephone number 715-344-4423. The main speaker for the meeting will be Betsy Kerlin, director of the North Central Conservancy Trust. The speaker will talk about the preservation of land and the role that this can play in preserving historic sites both natural and man made.

Thanks all of you for your support over the last number of years.



(Continued from page 2)

Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-344-4423

April 20 to May 15 One Room School program for the Stevens Point Public School District's 3rd grade students. Many other Portage County school systems will also be participating.

June 6 & 7 Heritage Days. Special Circus performances by Tim Tegge Saturday at 11:00 and 1:00; Sunday at 11:00. Doll display at the Church Museum.

Rising Star Mill

Located on County Rd Q in Nelsonville Wi.

Sat. & Sun. May 23-24 Annual Art Show 10AM to 4PM.

More dates will be added as schedules are finalized



The Pinery

The Pinery logo was definitely in use by April 1956 until at least 1984. A return to our "roots".

Winn Rothman Local History Award

The Portage County Historical Society board would like to congratulate Mr. Dan Hoppe on his receiving of this year's Winn Rothman Award for local history.

Mr. Hoppe is an advanced placement history teacher at SPASH. At the end of each school year for the past several years he has had his students research a local history topic and produce a story board based on that topic. A number of these boards are very well done and have been on display at Heritage Park.

The Society's board feels that Mr. Hoppe's attempts to get his students interested and involved in local history is very important and we are most happy to recognize this effort by him.

Rising Star Mill

Annual Arts Show & Sale

Saturday May 23 10AM to 5PM

Sunday May 24 10AM to 4PM

Fine Art & Fine Crafts

Pottery • Jewelry • Paintings • Sculpture •
Photographs • Folk Art • Carvings • Textiles •
Metal Smithing

Free Admission

Refreshments Available

County Rd Q, Nelsonville



Photo above and at the left shows parts of the Kachel Collection that was on display in the Church Museum in 2014.

The new display will incorporate all of the collection.

Visit Heritage Park during Heritage Days June 6 & 7.



Visit our website at: www.pchswi.org and visit us on Facebook for announcements!

BENJAMIN L. SHARPSTEIN

October 22, 1827 – May 2, 1907

Mayor of Stevens Point

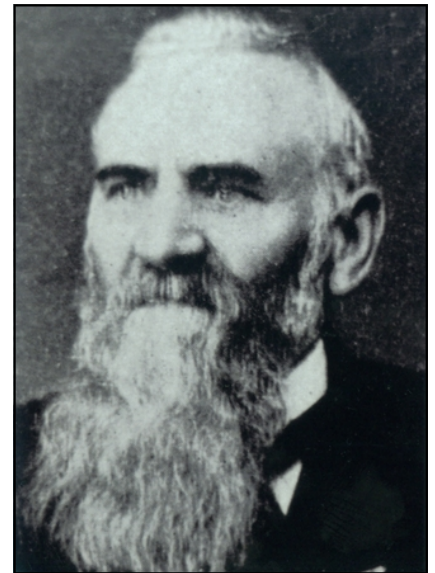
April 6, 1863 – March 12, 1864

Benjamin L. Sharpstein was a pioneer, veteran, adventurer, educator, lawyer, political activist, legislator, school board member, alderman and the 5th Mayor of Stevens Point.

He was born on October 22, 1827, the second son of Luther and Abigail Sharpstein of Bath, Steuben County, New York. In 1833 the family moved to a farm in McComb County, Michigan, and later, in 1846, to a farm in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. He was brought up and worked on a farm where education was highly valued. Since his youth he was very interested in becoming a lawyer.

At the age of nineteen, after reaching the Wisconsin Territory, Sharpstein enlisted in the army in 1846, at the outbreak of the Mexican War, and was discharged in 1848. He returned home, continued his legal training and was admitted to the Wisconsin Bar in 1852. There is no record as to where he studied law on his return from the war. Circumstantial evidence would indicate that he worked with his brother John or Gilbert Park in Stevens Point. If he did not study law with Park, Sharpstein must have come to this city soon after he was admitted to the Bar. He had a close personal and working relationship with Gilbert Park. A successful lawyer and student of the law, he practiced his profession for thirteen years in Stevens Point. Here he met and married the well educated daughter of Dr. Andrew Park and the younger sister of Gilbert Park on December 27, 1855. Sarah Jennie Park and Benjamin Sharpstein had five children, three of which were born in Stevens Point and two later in Walla Walla, Washington. Besides his law practice and raising a family, he also invested in timber lands in the townships of Buena Vista and Stockton. All evidence shows that he was deeply involved in the social and political events of the community; was member of the Episcopal Church and a Mason. Served on the School Board for three years. In 1861, helped to organize the military company in Stranton (Plover), with James Alban and Gilbert Park. The defense of the Union was a duty and a priority. In 1862-63, Sharpstein helped G. L. Park establish the Democratic Party in Portage County, which he chaired by December 12 of 1862. By December 16, he chaired the 6th district convention in LaCrosse, where some of the resolutions were very critical of the Civil War. His political views, that he "held loyally to the principles of the Democratic Party for the rest of his life, even though it later cost him a great deal politically", were influenced by Park.

In 1863, he was elected the 5th Mayor of Stevens Point. The thirty-five year old Mayor, with his previous community and political involvement, was well prepared for the difficult task of governing the growing, prosperous lumber town which was certainly impacted by national and regional events, not to mention the difficulty of meeting the infrastructural needs of a growing city at a reasonable tax rate. His previous service as alderman helped him in this regard. One also suspects that he may have had some extra burden on his leadership, since William Scholfield, the 1st



(Continued on page 6)



Mayor of Stevens Point, was now serving as alderman from the 2nd Ward, filling a vacancy. He was also elected president of the City Council. It was a full year of action. He often recognized the present needs and future possibilities of the community. He acted accordingly. He served his community well.

In the fall of 1864, Benjamin and Jennie decided to move to the Pacific Coast. In May of 1865, they moved to Washington State by wagon train. At Boise, Idaho, the decision was made to go to Walla Walla, Washington. They would remain there for the next forty-two years. "He quickly established his legal reputation and became prominent in shaping his political history of the Washington Territory". Even though he was a Democrat in a Republican district and state, Sharpstein was elected three times to the territorial (1866-67) and state legislature (1879-1880, 1886). In 1874 he was nominated for Congress; in 1879 he was also a candidate for the Supreme Court. In 1890 the Republican governor appointed Sharpstein to the Board of Tide Lands Commissioners. He was also "one of three board members to select the site for the Washington State Penitentiary", located in Walla Walla. He served on the School Board for twenty five-years, much of the time as its president. Education was extremely important to him. He was a thirty-second degree Mason, deeply involved in his church and the social culture of the community, much enjoyed dancing, horseback riding, dinners and other social activities, but he and his family refused to accept criticisms or gossip of others in their home.



He died on May 2, 1907, "at eighty years of age, of a heart attack". During his life he lived in three territories, which would become states. He was one of the founders of the State of Washington, but for thirteen years he left his mark on the City of Stevens Point, for which we can all be very grateful.

Next Mayor: William W. Spraggon.

Stevens Point Mayors Previously Published

William W, Schofield -- 1858 - 1859
 Albert G. Ellis - 1860
 Gilbert L Park - 1861
 D. D. Long - 1862



Clean-up Days at Heritage Park

During the week of May 11-16 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM will be Clean-up Days. Anton Anday, Park Curator, is seeking help cleaning six of the buildings at Heritage Park. Anyone willing to volunteer call Anton or Mary Beth at 715-341-2238. Supplies will be provided.





"The purposes of this organization are exclusively educational and shall be to preserve, advance, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Portage County, Wisconsin."

Joining the Historical Society couldn't be easier! Just fill out the form and mail it today. Membership runs from January - December of the calendar year. Please circle the level at which you are joining or renewing.

Student (ages 17-21)	\$15/year	Senior (ages 62 & older)	\$20/year
Individual	\$25/year	Family	\$40/year
Business	\$50/year	Pioneer	\$100/year
Patron	\$200/year	Sustaining	\$300/year
Benefactor	\$400/year	Life	\$500

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

No thanks, I don't want to become a member, but here is my tax deductible donation to the Society \$_____ Please circle your preference. →

- General Funds
- Synagogue Museum
- Rising Star Mill
- Heritage Park
- Historic Fire House No. 2
- Farm Museum

I'm interested in Volunteering, please call me at:

I have an artifact I'd like to donate, please call me at:



Mail this form with check made out to:

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

Or contact us at:
Phone: 715-344-4423
E-mail: portagecntywihistsoc@gmail.com



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

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

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

Return Service Requested

Photo to Remember



The Square, Stevens Point ca 1955

