



Official Publication of the Portage County Historical Society of Wisconsin

Polish National Army Recruiting in the United States "Haller's Blue Army"

They fought for their family. They fought for their freedom. They fought for those who came before them. Most of all, they fought for their beloved homeland - Poland.

When the First World War erupted in Europe in 1914, Polish patriots all over the world eagerly seized the opportunity to actively promote the idea of a free and independent Poland. Since the end of the 18th century, Poland had ceased to exist as an independent nation, being partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Nevertheless, the idea of a free and independent Poland never died. Throughout the 1800's, Polish patriots rose up but were denied the chance at nationhood.

With the outbreak of World War One and the impending breakup of the old Empires, many ethnic groups across eastern Europe sought independence, including Poles. It was a multi-layered effort, with groups working in France, Austria and the United States. National Democratic politician Roman Dmowski and the world famous pianist Ignacy Paderewski sought the sympathies for the Western Allies for Polish independence. Woodrow Wilson became a supporter and included the cause of Polish independence as Point number 13 in his "14 Points" war aims proclamation.

The Polish National Committee, which achieved recognition by President Wilson on November 10, 1917, was formed to organize regiments of Polish speaking people for active service on the French war front. Soldiers were recruited in the United States and Canada and sent to a training camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Canada before being sent abroad. Monies were raised and men were recruited from Polish communities across the upper Midwest and Northeast. There were 48 recruiting centers in the United States.

On October 4, 1918 the Polish National Committee appointed General Jozef Haller Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army in France.

Stevens Point, with its rich Polish heritage, eagerly embraced the cause of Polish freedom and became the recruiting center for Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Minnesota (one of twelve

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Society Events

Murder on Main Street!
Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 6:30PM. See Page 10.

Haller's Polish Army in France - WW I
Paul Valasek, author of Haller's Polish Army in France, will lecture on the Polish National Army during World War One on **Saturday, October 29, 2016 at 1 p.m.** in The Pineries Room at the Portage County Library, Stevens Point. Admission is free.

Role of Film in Promoting War
Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016, 6:30 to 8:30 at Lincoln Center. Leslie Debauche will be talking about the role of film in promoting the war and how they were played here. See Page 5.

PCHS Annual Meeting
April 6, 2017 at Sentry Theater
Business Meeting 6:15- 6:45PM
Program 7:00PM: "Over There"
See page 6.

See our web site
www.pchswi.org
or our Facebook page for up to date information and to view some of the photos in this newsletter in color

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The Pinery recruiting centers in the United States). Recruiting and fund-raising continued for several months.

The committee was headed by Jacob Wojak, Joseph Przewlocki, Rev. S.A. Elbert and Joseph Worzalla. Over \$12,000 was raised in Portage County to support this effort and over 300 recruits passed through Stevens Point to be registered and screened for this Army, many of them from Portage County. John Deptalo served as the key recruiter for Stevens Point, recruiting men from Portage county and as far north as the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. St. Peter's parish and Sacred Heart parish played key roles in raising funds and recruiting men. St. Peters' parish members hosted recruits traveling from distant locations prior to their entrainment for camp.

Of course, it was a difficult time, as the recruiting efforts for the Polish Army were seen to compete with the draft boards efforts to secure enlistments. Washington decided that only men who had not completed their citizenship could join the Polish Army. Further it was decided that men could only enlist in the Polish army if they were younger than 21 or older than 31. Despite these complicating factors for the enlistment effort, Poles across the nation responded to the call to fight for Poland's liberty.

John Deptalo, the primary recruiting officer for the Stevens Point center, having initiated his citizenship process, was ultimately called up to join the United States army, but ever loyal to the Polish independence cause, he left for France before he could be drafted and no further record of him has been located.

The men who left North America to serve in the Blue Army did not return after Armistice in November, 1918. In the spring of 1919, a well-equipped army of 70,000 men who had fought as a Polish army during "The Great War", then departed for Poland to continue Poland's struggle for independence and establish the borders of the newly reborn country during the years of 1919-1920. They fought in territorial wars against bordering countries including Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Silesia, and Galicia. When the army was finally demobilized in March, 1920, troops either stayed in Poland or returned to America. Shiploads of these volunteers set sail for America in April, 1920 with the last 285 volunteers arriving in America on February 17, 1921 on the transport vessel "The President Grant."

Paul Valasek, author of Haller's Polish Army in France, will lecture on the Polish National Army during World War One on Saturday, October 29, 2016 at 1 p.m. in The Pineries Room at the Portage County Library, Stevens Point. **Admission is free.** The program is sponsored by the Portage County Historical Society, Polish Heritage Society, Heritage of Portage County Inc. and John Paul II Polish Legion of American Veterans Post 185.



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Synagogue

Open Memorial Day to
Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-600-4930

Closed for the Season!
Call for a tour.

Shabbat:

Friday, Dec. 14, 2016
and
Friday, April 14, 2017

Historic Fire House No. 2

Open Memorial Day to
Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-600-4930

Closed for the Season!
Call for a tour.

Heritage Park

Open Memorial Day to
Labor Day
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm
By appointment 715-600-4930

Closed for the Season!
Call for a tour.

Rising Star Mill

**Friday, September 30, Sat. &
Sun., October 1, 2.**
THE RISING STAR MILL'S OPEN
HOUSE 11:00AM - 4:00PM
Featuring "The Barns of Port-
age County". Scheduled to co-
incide with The Hidden Studio
Art Tour.

THE GREAT WAR SPEAKER SERIES: HALLER'S POLISH ARMY IN FRANCE



Portage County residents supported this effort with men and money
to not only win "the Great War" but also win independence for Poland.

A Presentation by:

Paul S. Valasek

Author of *Haller's Polish Army in France*

Saturday, October 29, 2016 • 1:00PM

The Pineries Room, Portage County Library

FREE ADMISSION

Sponsored by: Portage County Historical Society, Polish Heritage Awareness Society, Heritage of Portage County, Inc.
and John Paul II Polish Legion of American Veterans Post 195.



President's Report

The society has seen a great many things happening over the past few months. The two major projects that we are working on – the barn and the World War I – have taken great strides.

The exterior work on the barn is nearing completion. I wish to thank both Mr. Abbrederis and Mr. Anday for their work on the barn project. Without their work we would not have gotten as far as we have. The siding, roofing, doors and nearly all the windows are complete. The handicapped ramp is nearly finished as is the access to the major door on the west side. The last major part of the exterior project that remains is the landscaping of the lean-to portion on the south side.

The World War I project is moving ahead on several fronts. To date the society has published four of the planned nine books that talk about Portage County's role in the conflict. The four publications include a book of trench poetry called "Song of the Trenches", two books under the title "From the Boys with the Colors" which include letters written by local soldiers about their experiences in the war and the fourth book a short biography of Mde Schumann-Heinke put together by Diane Peplinski. The fifth book on Troop I should be out in the next three weeks. (See Books Page 6.)

Our speaker series will see two guest speakers coming in October and November. The topics are the Polish Army and its role both in the war itself and the role played here in raising the troops to fight. The second will focus on the role that movies played in selling the war and what played in Stevens Point.

Thanks to the efforts of Sarah Scripps the society received a grant from UWSP to purchase archival materials to protect our military artifacts. She was able to secure a work study grant for two students to work on both the video done earlier and the artifact storage. The course that Ms. Scripps teaches on local history will be involved in developing the story boards for the Heritage Park exhibits and the window in the public library. As mentioned the video has now been edited and will premiered on April 6, 2017 at the Sentry Theater. Five of the structures in Heritage Park will be reworked to portray an aspect of World War I and its impact on Portage County.

The World War I project has been a large undertaking and would not be as far as it is without the work of Sue Koehl who has been chairing the project and doing a great deal of work. UWSP has also given the project a great deal of help in both classroom work and financial help. Sentry Insurance has contributed over \$3,000 to the project as well as technical assistance in the use of the video equipment. A number of families have contributed both artifacts and financial help particularly toward the publishing of our books. John Hartman has given of his expertise in both helping to reproduce photos from old negatives and creating a light painting to be used for our publicity for the upcoming exhibit.

In addition to the above two projects the society also continued its program of bringing 3rd and 4th graders from around the county to have a day in the one room school. The teachers present school as it would have been done in 1910. Each year we are able to bring about 600 students to this program. Thanks to Mary Beth Anday for her organizational skills in making this program possible.

The society's Heritage Days in June saw a "Bring Your Doll To Tea" program by Laura Keyes. She portrayed Laura Ingalls Wilder to an audience of adults and girls who were encouraged to bring their dolls. The tea took place at the Cottage Café. We would like to thank the owners of the Cottage Café for the way they helped us with the tea.

Finally, our doll exhibit in the Heritage Park museum has drawn a great deal of attention over the past two years. Many of the dolls came from the collection of Joyce Slack and we would like to thank her for the

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The Pinery contributions she made to this exhibit.

The other three sites also drew a number of people. The Rising Star Mill in Nelsonville is still presenting a number of programs and is preparing to paint the exterior of the structure. The Synagogue hosted a book signing late in the season drawing a number of people interested in the Ice Age Trail. A small portion of the entry of the Synagogue has been set aside to house as an area to showcase our publications. Anyone interested in obtaining any of our publications can contact the society at 715-600-4930 or at P.O. Box 672, Stevens Point.

As a reminder the society still takes aluminum cans, any cords, wires or Christmas lights. We also will take micro wave ovens but no other appliances as we can not dispose of much of what is contained in them.



First Military Operation by the US Army - World War 1 - Battle of St Mihiel - DASH



"Doing Their Bit at the Movies How Stevens Point's New Gem and Lyric Theaters Enlisted in WW1"

Wednesday, November 30, 2016 6:30 p.m.

Lincoln Center, Stevens Point

Free Admission

co-sponsored by Portage County Historical Society and Aging and Disability Resource Center

Dr. Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, professor emerita, UWSP Division of Communication, will describe how movie theaters in Stevens Point enlisted in the war effort on the home front during WW1. She will show clips of some of the patriotic movies that were programmed, including a short film - starring America's Sweetheart, Mary Pickford - made to boost the sale of Liberty Bonds. Theater managers Russ Gregory and J.R. McKinlay did more than simply program movies though - they also lent their theater stages to public speakers allied with the government's Committee on Public Information, and they promoted benefits to aid the Red Cross among other wartime causes. Movie theaters joined other businesses in Stevens Point to raise morale and provide information. This sort of "practical patriotism" allowed movie theaters to boost the war effort, enhance their good will within the community, and increase the size of their audience.



“Over There”

Portage County Experience in World War One

Portage County Historical Society

Thursday, April 6, 2017

Sentry Theater

Tentative program.

- PCHS Annual Meeting.
- Color Guards
- “Voices of Portage County” - Theater style presentation using various community members voicing speeches from 1917-1918 showing the wide variety of sentiments of the time.
- “Over There” Documentary presentation.
- Musical Selections.
- Admiral Grant family.

More details in the March, 2017 Newsletter!

Books

World War I Books Published or Planned to be Published



| | | | |
|--|---------|---------------|--------|
| Mde. Schumann-Heinke | \$10.00 | Clayton Slack | \$ TBA |
| Song of the Trenches | \$10.00 | Troop I | \$ TBA |
| From the Boys with the Colors “The McCreedy Brothers” | \$10.00 | Carl Jacobs | \$ TBA |
| From the Boys with the Colors “Voices from the Front” | \$10.00 | Summary Book | \$ TBA |
| Official Recipe Book | \$5.00 | | |





RISING STAR MILL

Fall 2016

Yuck! tee hee!, giggle giggle!, wow! Those are some of the comments made by middle school kids as they tour the Rising Star Mill and are introduced to the only toilet built into the mill in 1868. Their fascination with this feature at the mill seems, for some reason, to be of universal interest to them. The RSM is a popular field trip site for local Amherst, Plover and Stevens Point schools. It is a local historic site that has not been altered too much from its original appearance 148 years ago. And, it is free. May and June are popular months for these field trips and we are always happy to welcome the kids, their teachers and parents to the R.S. Mill. This year, the Mill welcomed close to two hundred Grade and Middle school students in May and June. In August we conducted a tour for a group of students and their chaperones, from The Raw-hide program.

In May, the RSM Committee and the "Friends of the Mill" clean the mill of the winter accumulation of dust, cobwebs and ever falling grain from the walls. This is necessary every year in order to prepare for the summer events and periodic touch-ups are required throughout the summer. Volunteers landscaped the garden by weeding and planting the garden around the mill with plants they donated. This year we completed the back deck and patio which greatly improved the back corner of the Mill.

We promote the RSM as a community resource. The Tomorrow River Historical Society conducted one of their quarterly meetings at the Mill this summer and "The Norski Needlers Quilt Guild" exhibited their beautiful quilts in conjunction with the annual Nelsonville Pie and Ice Cream Social.

The Mill has become a popular site for groups and individuals who want to experience an event in a "rustic" setting. By the end of this season, in addition to our regularly scheduled entertainment events, we will have had one birthday party, two wedding showers, a wedding rehearsal dinner and, for the third year in a row, a wedding. Our Mill year will conclude with the annual Open House and Barns of Portage County exhibit from September 30 to October 2, 2016.

The old mill gets plenty of use and support from the local community. Each event introduces someone new to the history of the mill and a Facebook account has helped to promote the popularity of the Rising Star Mill.

Jim Walker





Agricultural Museum Report

Progress as of mid-September, 2016

Phase one of the project is rapidly approaching completion. As of September 15th the following additional work has been completed. The exterior siding has been finished, double doors are up, cement steps and stoop on North entrances have been poured. Also, lean-to has been completed, the west ramp has been completed and the furnace has been installed.

Within the next two weeks the exterior will be sealed (we are waiting for product to arrive), Hanging lights will be rewired, exterior lights will be installed, windows and handicapped ramp will be installed, fill will be leveled.

As always, the anticipated work to be completed may be influenced by the weather, product availability and subcontractor availability.

Jim Abbrederis



Book Signing At the Synagogue

On August 21, 2016, the Temple Beth Israel Synagogue hosted a local author, Kris-Rued Clark, She delighted the group with tales regarding the genesis of the book, *Adventures on Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail Day Hikes, Weekend Jaunts and Family Vacations*. Ms Rued-Clark co-authored this book with longtime Ice Age Trail enthusiast and 1,000 mile hiker, Sylvia Oberle.

Sylvia Oberle is an environmental studies teacher in Thorp, Wisconsin. Her interest in the Ice Age Trail originated in 1993, when she hiked two and five mile segments before attending the dedication of the Chippewa Moraine Interpretive Center. She decided not only that she would support the trail, but she would hike the entire 1,000 miles. She also loves photography and has had other non-fiction works published in state and national publications.

Kris Rued-Clark has is a free-lance writer who has written for and served as editor for a wide variety of

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The Pinery local publications. She often authored articles promoting the events of the Portage County Historical Society. She had spotlighted the Synagogue and interviewed our then Vice President and dedicated curator of the museum, Mark Seiler. Mark had long planned to welcome the authors to share this book when it was published and we were very pleased to be able to see this happen just as he wished. Heather Carroll, the present curator and former docent with Mark, generously provided the site and her time to make this presentation possible.

By chance, Sylvia and Kris met, found a mutual love of hiking ,writing and photographing their adventures as they hiked the trail together and eventually this guide was created, allowing others to discover this thousand mile “gem” right here in Wisconsin.

The text and photos are organized by various segments of the trail. Each segment has an overview of its wonders, a clear set of directions to finding it and a list of options for enjoying each segment. The color photography makes the sections very inviting, the voices of the authors shine through making for an engaging read. The authors’ poems add to the pleasure. The Belmont, Emmons, Hartman Creek Segments are familiar to local readers and highlights the yearly Hike-A-Thon, held the first Saturday in October, which the Portage and Waupaca County Chapters host, raising support for the all volunteer care of the trail sections.

The books are available locally at Kindred Spirit Books and Schmeackle Reserve, both in Stevens Point, and at the Village Hive in Amherst.

Murder on Main Street!

Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 6:30PM.

Erik McFarland will lead our first guided walking tour entitled “Murders on Main Street”. Join him for an entertaining 1-hour stroll through downtown Stevens Point!

Meet at the Courthouse parking lot, Church St. by Civil War Memorial, on Tuesday, October 18 at 6:30 PM The tour will conclude at the Riverfront Art Center. (You can park in the Courthouse Parking lot next to the monument.)

A Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Stevens Point.

Learn about early Stevens Point's most infamous homicides.

Not suitable for children due to graphic subject matter.

Free to the public. Donations to the Portage County Historical Society appreciated.

Rain or Shine. Dress appropriately for the weather.





The Pinery

Is the official publication of the Portage County Historical Society, Inc. of Wisconsin published March 20th, May 20th, Sept. 20th and Dec. 20th of each year.

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A monthly business meeting is held the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM, except for December, at the Synagogue Museum, 1475 Water St. Stevens Point, WI., unless otherwise announced.

An Annual Meeting is held the second Wednesday of April at a location to be announced. An annual report and election of Directors occur at this meeting

The membership and public are welcome to attend all meeting.

Visit our website at:
www.pchswi.org

Visit us on Facebook



"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 (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): _____

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

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

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: 715-600-4930

E-mail: portagecntywhistsoc@gmail.com



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Photo to Remember

Sailors at Great Lakes Training Center, ca. 1917-18

