

Official Publication of the Portage County Historical Society of Wisconsin

## Rising Star Mill

2018 marks 150 years of existence for the Rising Star Mill. Jerome Nelson built his grist mill on the shore of the Tomorrow River after he returned from service in the Civil War. Over those 150 years, the RSM has been at the center of community activities in the Village named after its founder. The Rising Star Mill Committee recently held its first meeting of the year to plan the season's events. We will also, be celebrating our recognition as a State Historical Landmark and anticipate, this summer, being placed on the National Registry of Historical Places.

As usual, our first official RSM event will be the Annual Art Show and Sale on May 26 - 27, 2018. This has become a popular event and a great place to meet many local artist and have chance encounters with friends and acquaintances in this unique venue.

Although our summer schedule is still being developed, Kicking off our musical performances for 2018, will be a crowd favorite, "Art Stevenson and High Water" on Friday June 22. They are one of Wisconsin's top bluegrass bands and excellent musicians. They love the acoustical brilliance of the old wood of the mill.

On Friday August 17, a new act for the Rising Star Mill will be the outstanding, world traveled "Patchouli" which is master guitarist Bruce Hecksel and singer-songwriter, guitarist Julie Patchouli. Patchouli has "performed over 4,000 shows, toured a million miles on the road supporting 20 CD releases, won songwriting awards, industry awards, performed on TV, film and are played on Radio programs around the world." This promises to be a special night. There will be more programs developed in weeks to come.

Jim Walker



### Society Events

**Annual Meeting:** April 18, 2018  
at the Library's Pinery Room  
starting at 6:30. Guest speaker:  
Leslie Bellais: "Wisconsin: The  
Traitor State" continues our  
World War I commemoration.

**Moving Through History**  
Launch Party Saturday April 28  
1:00 - 4:00PM At Firehouse

**Cultural Fest:** May 12

**Synagogue**  
Open Memorial Day to  
Labor Day  
Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4pm  
By appointment 715-600-4930  
**Our Bookstore will be open  
during normal museum hours**

**Friday April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
Shabbat & Holocaust Memorial

**Historic Fire House No. 2**  
Open Memorial Day to  
Labor Day. Saturdays  
9 am - 1:30pm  
By appointment 715-600-4930

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# President's Report

The Society is in the middle point of our Great War Remembrance. We will again open the museums on Memorial Day. As last summer six of our buildings in Heritage Park are dedicated to the project. Over the winter we would like to thank the LIFE program for having the Society present a three part program dealing with how movies played a role in promoting the war to the American public. David Hastings and Leslie Debauch each made a presentation on some aspect of the use of film as propaganda. We would like thank all of them for their time and dedication to the project. We are also in the process of producing between two and three more books dealing with the Great War and the role that Portage County played in that conflict.

The Society's Annual Business Meeting will take place on Wednesday April 18 at 6:15 in the Pinery Room of the Portage County Library. Board member elections, awards and summaries of the 2017 year will take place. The program portion of the Annual Meeting will start at 6:30 and feature Leslie Belais. Ms. Belais a State Historical Society curator, will present a program on "Wisconsin-the Traitor State." She has given this presentation on the radio program University of the Air on PBS. It is very informative and explores why this state was seen very skeptically by much of the rest of the country as being, potentially unpatriotic with respect to the war. Both the Annual Meeting and the program are open to the public.

Thanks to the efforts of Jim Abbrederis, Jason Jones, Anton Anday and Heartland Homes our Barn Project is near completion. The exterior is complete and the agricultural displays are being assembled for the interior. We plan to have this project complete by the time we open the park on Memorial Day.

One of the most ambitious projects the Society has been involved with is being put together by Charys Hess of Transcribing Dance Company. She is putting together a modern dance project, "Moving Through History", to try to help the Society raise the \$30,000 we need to fix up the Church Museum in Heritage Park. The roof, which is now almost 20 years beyond its life expectancy, needs to be replaced as it is beginning to leak. When we replace the roof we will also replace the steeple that blew off the church well over 70 years ago. The building's interior has been rebuilt to take the weight of the steeple. The last need of the church is to have the windows put back in. This last portion of the project is difficult as each of eight windows needs three sashes each of which is slightly different from the others-there was no standard sizing.

If you wish to help us with the Church Project please send whatever you can to the Society's address - P.O. Box 672 in Stevens Point. Mark the check for the Church Project. Thank you.



*(Continued from page 1)*

**Moving Through History**  
Launch Party Saturday April 28  
1:00 - 4:00PM At Firehouse

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

**Hie Corner School Program:**  
April 23 - May 11

**Heritage Days:** Saturday June  
16, 10-4; Sunday June 17, 11-4.

### Rising Star Mill

**Annual Art Show and Sale:**  
Saturday May 26  
Sunday May 27

**Friday June 22:** Art Stevenson  
and High Water

**Friday August 17:** "Patchouli"



## The Pinery

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



## PAUL COLLINS - Portage County's Great War Aviator

The Pinery

(The following account consists of excerpts from pages 2-17 of Collins' autobiographical *Tales of an Old Air-Faring Man* (1983), available in reprint from the Portage County Historical Society. Born in Wooster, Ohio, Collins graduated from State Normal School, Stevens Point, in 1912, at age 21.)

"Stevens Point, in the First World War, was represented in three branches of service: Major General McGlachlin, Commander of the First Division; Admiral Grant, Commander of a fleet; and Lieutenant Paul F. Collins, Commander of a Jenny!

"Early in 1917, in Chicago, while I was trying to make enough money to take flying lessons, the United States declared war on Germany. Immediately, Don Vaughan, my roommate, and I went down to the Marine headquarters on South State Street to get as much enlistment information as we could. Don was all for signing up then and there but I suggested that we go home and talk it over until we knew more about the service. I had discovered that there was no Marine aviation as such.

"My next step was to apply to the Signal Corps to become an aviation cadet (at that time all aerial activity was in the Signal Corps).

"My first flying instructor at Chanute Field [in Rantoul, Illinois,] was a chap called 'Bonehead' Smith. Smith had been struck in the head by a propeller.

"After soloing there was a period where each student practiced take-offs and landings until the observing officer was satisfied that the cadet had mastered these procedures.

"Our next orders took us to Ellington Field, Houston, Texas, just as it was opened in January, 1918. This was to become a bomber training field. First, however, it had to serve as a primary field as the pilots had to be trained to fly before they could be trained as bombers.

"After soloing again at Ellington, one of the first tests given to cadets, on their way to becoming second lieutenants, was a solo cross-country flight.

"The Jennies to be used on this aerial safari were insufficiently equipped for cross-country flying as the instrumentation consisted of a rev counter, registering the engine revolutions per minute. It was never suggested that the engine be throttled back - full throttle was 1450 RPMs, which created a speed of 60 MPH.

"In addition to the rev counter on the instrument board, there was a[n] altimeter and an oil pressure gauge. Two of the most important instruments for cross- country flying, a gas gauge and a compass, were conspicuously absent.

"It had been established by the brass that an acrobatic course should be instituted as soon as was possible. Someone selected a dozen of the newly commissioned second lieutenants as the instructors, myself among them, and allocated a dozen Jennies as the proper ships.

"During this time, the original group of instructors, working from February 1 to July 1, never lost a plane or pilot. Establishing that perfect record, we turned out hundreds of acrobatic pilots.

"I had been instructing Major General Frank in acrobatics and on arriving at our command post at 7:05 instead of 7:00 in the morning the good Major General was waiting for me.

"'Sorry, sir,' I said, feeling that any excuse of my tardiness would not soften the situation.

"'What class are you?' he asked.

"'I hope to be pursuit, but I really don't know because I broke a wheel landing once on a railroad track.'

"He smiled and replied, 'They don't make good runways.'

(Continued on page 6)



At the Business meeting of Sept 13, 2017 a young lady attended the meeting. Little did we know what would develop out of Charys Hess's presentation!

"Transcribing Dance Company, established by Charys Hess in June of 2012, was set in place to collaboratively melt the art of writing and storytelling with the art of dance. TDC is a professional postmodern dance company which explores a journalistic approach on pedestrian movement. The choreography can be followed by a provided story line, narration, or appreciated in its most simple form, dance."

Admittedly, the Board was at a loss to comprehend how all this translated to history, but seven months later...

**STEVENS POINT, Wis. (April, 2018)** – Transcribing Dance Company is one of the newest grant recipients of the Stevens Point Area Tourism Development Grant Fund. The project, Moving Through History, has received \$2,500, to enhance the tourism assets in the Stevens Point Area.

"We are very excited to support this project. It is a new concept and we are thrilled to see it come to life to tell the history of the region," said Sara Brish, executive director of the Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.



"Moving Through History", a camera dance work created from local history and shot in historical sites, is raising funds this season to save a piece of Heritage Park. Our very own Plover, Wisconsin park is home to the oldest church in Portage County. Without our help, the church/World War I museum could be a total loss. Please consider donating today to help us SAVE A PIECE OF HERITAGE!

Portage County Historical Society, Thousand Lumens Productions, and CREATE Portage County are teaming up with Transcribing Dance Company to create our very own piece of history. Stories local to Stevens Point and Portage County, are transcribed into movement episodes which take place in local historical buildings. These camera dance vignettes will bring to light 4 captivating moments in history:

- **Seven Days Leave** – a story of a newlywed couple parted by a call to war.
- **The Sisterhood** – a replication of an event put on by the sisters of the synagogue community and a look at what it was like to talk about the use of non-kosher products in that time
- **The Downtown Fire** – a re-creation of one of the largest fires recorded in our community; the story of two women lost in the flames
- **Codes of Conduct** – a glimpse of female teachers loosening up after hours; what happens behind closed school doors when the women let loose and for a moment and are free from the rules set in place.

The kick off for this project will be part of a block party April 28, 2018 at the Society's Historic Fire-

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**STEVENS POINT BLOCK PARTY**  
April 28, 2018 from 1:00-4:00PM  
**Downtown Fire House No.2**

LIVE MUSIC and dancing with *Dekorra*  
Historical Fire House Tours  
Raffle Baskets  
Locally Crafted Goodies  
**"Help us save a piece of heritage"**  
\$5/Adult \$3/Students 6 and up & Seniors  
**MOVING THROUGH HISTORY**

(Continued from page 4)

house No. 2 located at 1949 Strongs Ave, Stevens Point WI.

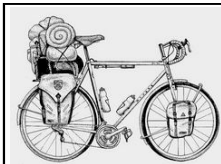
Several additional events are planned. Our May 20th newsletter will be able to provide additional details. See Transcribing Dance Company's website at: <https://www.transcribingdance.com/>

## These Events are still in the Planning Stages!

**Please Note:** Beginning April 15, 2018, we will be able to take online payments through our website! Watch our website, [pchswi.org](http://pchswi.org) or our Facebook page for updates!



Join PCHS for a **Pub Crawl** through Stevens Point's historic drinking establishments on May 2nd! 7:00PM \$20 per person.  
Must be 21 years or older.



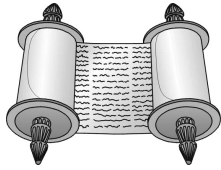
Join PCHS for a **Historic Bike Tour** of Stevens Point on May 20th from noon-3pm!  
\$10 per person.





## Shabbat and Holocaust Memorial

Please join the Mt Sinai congregation for a Holocaust Memorial service and Shabbat on **Friday April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm** at the Stevens Point Historical Synagogue, 1475 Water Street.



All are welcome to attend. The service will commemorate the murder of over 6 million Jews and others in the Holocaust and will invite participants to remember, reflect, and look toward renewal. Music will be shared by Melanie Kuolt (vocal) and Lawrence Leviton (cello).



*(Continued from page 3)*

“I agree, sir, but I had to get down and felt it was better than landing on some cows in an adjacent field.’

“Pick out a Jenny and a partner and fly over to Gerstner Field at Lake Charles [Louisiana], present my compliments to Major Longnecker and ask him if we can help in any way. They have had a hurricane over there that raised hell with the whole post and particularly their flying equipment which was blown out of the hangars and apparently went sailing around without any pilots, although, I must say, the way some of these pilots fly, one could hardly tell the difference.’

“Should the ship be left there?’ I asked.

“Anything he wishes, and when you return I may have some good news for you,’ he chortled.

“Yes, sir,’ I replied, giving him the most vigorous salute possible. What a boost after what I had expected because of the tardiness.

“Lucky,’ the guys all yelled when I came into the barracks on returning from Gerstner. So it was really true. The major general had gotten through overseas orders for me. I stifled a yawn, commenting, ‘Sobriety and industry always win, and, of course, a friendly commanding officer helps.’

“So on to New York where I received a small-town boy’s initiation. I forgot to lock my hotel bedroom door, and awoke with \$3 left out of \$300. What gallantry the thief displayed, leaving me enough money for breakfast. New York is a bare-tooth town for suckers.”

By: “A former Board Member”

# Are your dues up to date?

No label here means your dues are up to date.  
Thank You!!

If your label is above, the Expiration date is shown. Example: Jan-18 means your dues have expired as of that date. Please renew using the form on page 7.



# 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.

### Officers

President: Tim Siebert  
Vice-president: Dave Simonis  
Secretary: Jerry Rohlinger  
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Jim Abbrederis     Anton Anday  
Mary Egle             Milo Harpstead  
Dan Hoppe             Diane Lang  
Eric McFarland     Mary Beth Anday  
Sarah Scripps         Beverly West  
Jason Jones             John Harry  
CWMR, Ltd

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

An Annual Meeting is usually 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 any meeting.

Visit our website at:  
[www.pchswi.org](http://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): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

May, 2018

- |                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 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:

\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU**  
FOR YOUR  
**SUPPORT!**

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: [pchswi@gmail.com](mailto:pchswi@gmail.com)



Portage County Historical Society  
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