

Official Publication of the Portage County Historical Society of Wisconsin

## Cataloging Committee Report

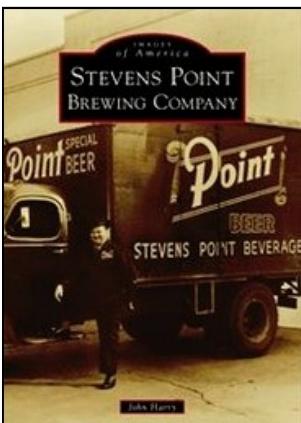
Since PCHS began, first incorporation granted on Dec. 12, 1951, its stated goal was preservation of the history of Portage County. To this end we have been quite successful! The early leaders gathered much history, but during Tim Siebert's presidency, 1980 to present, our collections have grown to an estimated one million items, including photographs and negatives.

Yet, something has been missing? What do we have? Only the material housed at UWSP's Archive section has been cataloged! What about the other 75%?

About 7 years ago a proposal was presented to the Board of Directors for pursuing Past Perfect Museum Software as our cataloging system. The usual culprit, lack of funds, delayed the project. Interest in rectifying this problem arose about 18-months ago and a Cataloging Committee was formed to address this problem.

The year 2019 has been fortunate for the Society as a few large bequests have been received. A portion of Ann Buck's bequest was allocated at the May 8th, Business Meeting for the Cataloging of our artifacts and collections, \$7,000 in total. After several Committee meetings to explore options, a course of action was adopted by the Committee, passed by the Board and we now have the hardware, software (Cloud based) and all the extras needed to begin cataloging!

Now the FUN begins!



John Harry, former PCHS Board member, has written a book "Stevens Point Brewing Company". It went on sale Dec. 6th with special presentations happening that day at the Point Brewery. John is currently enrolled at UW-Milwaukee working on his Masters Degree. This past summer he did an Internship at the Smithsonian.



### Society Events

**Annual Meeting**, April 8, 2020, 6:30PM at the Public Library, Stevens Point. 2020 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War II. Guest speaker will be Deb Saito. Her parents were interred at Tule Lake Segregation Camp.

#### Synagogue

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

Closed for the Season

#### Historic Fire House No. 2

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

Closed for the Season

#### Heritage Park

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

Closed for the Season

#### Rising Star Mill

Closed for the Season



# President's Report

2019 saw a number of successes during the year and some things that did not take place. The weather prevented the Church/Museum and Bancroft Depot getting a new roof. The plan is to put them on in the spring. However, the Church/Museum did see the bell tower put up on the building to recreate what the original building looked like. The bell tower will be completed during the roofing process in the spring.

The main furnace at the Synagogue died and it, along with the smaller one, must be replaced. Anyone interested in helping can send a check to the Society with "furnace donation" on the check. Thank you for whatever you can help with.

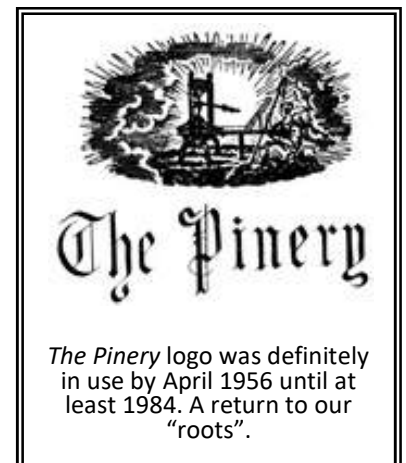
The local branch of the League of Women Voters held a re-enactment at the Engford house earlier this year. Several people were dressed in turn-of-the-century costumes and presented a program on the movement by women to get the right to vote. About 40 people were present at the event.

2020 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II and the Society is planning a number of events to commemorate the involvement of this county in that conflict both at the front and at home. We have already received funds from the Vietnam Veterans of America organization to publish a series of interviews of men in the 82<sup>nd</sup> division including two from Portage County. The V.V.A. also funded the reprint of Malcolm Rosholt's book "Days of Ching Pao". His look at and role in the Flying Tigers in China. Sue Koehl is helping research various sources to try to help tell the story of this county. We hope to publish several books based on the research. The Society has already set up two public talks relating to the war. On February 26 Bill Stokes will discuss the topic of German POWs held in Wisconsin (he is the author of Margaret's War). Additionally, our annual meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup> (at the Stevens Point Public Library) will feature Ms. Saito talking about the experiences of her parents (Fumi and Perry Saito) in the relocation camps during the war. Perry Saito was the minister at St. Paul's Methodist church during the 1950's and into the 1960's.

A thank you to Anton Anday, Jim Abbrederis and Jason Jones for the great deal of work they have put in on the Print Shop in Heritage Park. The site, it is planned, should be open in the spring. The group has also started work on the Post Office/Doctor's Office. We hope to get a long way on that project this coming summer.

Thanks to Eric McFarland the annual "Murder Walk" this year drew nearly 200 participants. Mr. McFarland presents an entertaining walk through downtown while discussing the various murders that took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Society still takes aluminum cans, any electric cords or wires and micro waves that you no longer need. Please leave them at the south side door of the Synagogue. We also have a barrel located at the same door that you can put any Christmas Tree light strings that no longer work. Thank you.



# Rising Star Mill

By: Jim Walker

The Rising Star Mill's 2019 season was a success on multiple levels. We began our summer programs with the, Marianne Walker produced, 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Art Show and Sale, during Memorial Day weekend. This was a well-attended event that became the most financially successful sale, ever, for the participating artists.

Following the success of the art show, RSM Treasurer and long-time volunteer, Jim Miller produced four well received concerts featuring a variety of artist representing different musical genres.

The Mill continues to be a valuable community asset and resource. There were four local school tours and several Historical Society tours led by Anton Anday. There was the annual free movie night that features a Wisconsin or north woods theme feature. Additionally, there were seven rentals by local individuals and community groups. We concluded our season with an exceptional Open House and an exhibition of "The Barns of Portage County."

We enjoyed exceptional volunteer support from Rising Star Mill Committee members and from "Friends of the Rising Star Mill," made up of folks who are not wild about doing "committee meetings but are willing to complete a specific task. As a result, there were many behind the scenes volunteers who baked, served, planted, mulched, cleaned, repaired and maintained this 151 year old facility.

Aside from those previously mentioned, thanks to Chuck and Mary Egle, Margaret Stratton, Donna Perzewski, Marge Krogwold, Dave and Jeanine Osterbrink, Jerry and Karen Trzebiatowski, Tom and Donna Literski, and Bobby and Katy Bailey.

We lost two vital contributors this year, Brenda Gingles and John Morser. Both were well known local artist who, in their own way, devoted their time and energy to making the RSM a photogenic jewel for the Village of Nelsonville and the Portage County Historical Society.

On to 2020 and the 152<sup>nd</sup> year of Jerome Nelsons Rising Star Mill.



MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE RISING STAR MILL



## Heritage Park Report

In this last communication of 2019 we would like to thank all the people involved and committed to the Heritage Park project. Whether you volunteered your time, your financial resources, gifted us with artifacts or promoted our programs to maintain the heritage, history and culture of our communities, we are grateful for your contributions.

This year our planned improvements at the Park were ambitious in nature. Despite interference by Mother Nature and other obstacles, we were still able to accomplish some of our planned projects. The Bancroft Depot was painted as well as the semaphore and the depot outhouse. Construction on the Church/Museum bell tower has also been started. Most of the work was done in the Pierce building print shop interior. It is our hope to open this exhibit by the 2020 season.

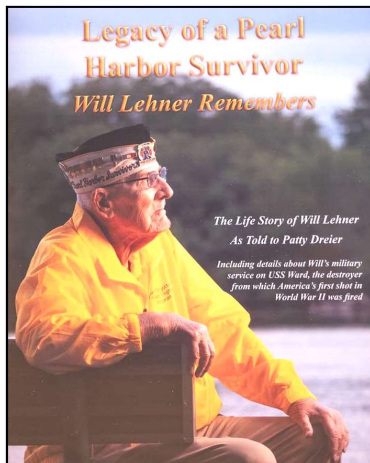
The damage by the July storm has been cleaned up and restored. We were very lucky that none of the buildings were damaged in that event.

So what do we have to plan for 2020. This winter we will work on some restoration of the Post Office/Doctors Office. As soon as weather permits we will reroof the Bancroft Depot and the Church/Museum. We will complete the Church/Museum bell tower and install the chimney on the- Bancroft Depot. If we are able, we will try to seal the exterior of the agricultural display area. Other projects for the Engford House (Circus House) and Franklin/Caulkins House are in the works.

We will also continue to develop displays and publications dealing with local history. It will be a busy year. Anything any of you can do to convince Mother Nature to not interfere with our goals and objectives would be greatly appreciated. We thank you for your support and hope that you will continue to do so in the coming years. It is an exciting project to preserve our traditions for future generations.



## Will Lehner - Pearl Harbor Survivor



The book, "Legacy of a Pearl Harbor Survivor: Will Lehner Remembers," is his story as told to Patty Dreier, a former Portage County executive. Proceeds from all sales go to the Never Forgotten Honor Flight in Wausau. He was on the second flight of the program and since then has gone to almost every welcome-home program for the returning flights at Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee.

Lehner was a member of the crew of the U.S. destroyer Ward which fired the first shot of World War II more than an hour before Japanese planes started bombing Pearl Harbor and other American military sites in Hawaii.

Lehner was assisted by former Portage County Executive Patty Dreier in writing his book. At 98, he knows that while they say it's never too late to tell your story... "I was thankful that I have my memory. I've met friends of mine who can't remember last week," he said.

Each copy of the book is \$10, and Lehner is donating all of the profits from his book to the Never Forgotten Honor Flight, which he went on years ago and hopes other veterans can experience.

For those who were unable to attend the book signing, you can purchase a copy by contacting Patti Adamski by email, [padamski@charter.net](mailto:padamski@charter.net), or by calling (715) 340-3616.

In 2014 the Society named its Military History section of its web site in honor of Will Lehner.



Photo # NH 50265 USS Ward off Mare Island, California, circa September 1918



The Wickes-class destroyer, USS *Ward* (Destroyer #139) was quickly built at Mare Island Navy Yard, California, for World War I. Following her service in the Atlantic, she supported the trans-Atlantic flight of the NC flying boats in May 1919. In July 1920, *Ward* received the hull number DD-139. Decommissioned in 1921, she was recommissioned after twenty years after the outbreak of World War II and was sent to Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, in 1941. On December 7, *Ward* was patrolling off the entrance to Pearl Harbor when she encountered, attacked, and sank a Japanese Midget Submarine, which were the first shots of the Pacific War. Converted to a high-speed transport, she was redesignated APD-16 in February 1943 and was sent for war service again in the Pacific. During the landings at Ormoc Bay on December 7, 1944, Japanese aircraft, along with a suicide bomber, attacked *Ward*, damaging her to the point of abandoning ship. She was sunk by gunfire by USS *O'Brien* (DD-725), commanded by Commander William W. Outerbridge, who had commanded *Ward* during the attack on Pearl Harbor three years prior.

## Don Kottke Bench Dedication

Sunday, Oct. 13th, as his family and friends gathered in the Agricultural Barn to officially dedicate the bench placed on the Bancroft Depot's north side deck. The bench was moved inside for the ceremony. It will be placed back outside in the spring.


Don Kottke was a Charter member of Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders serving as the Secretary for 25+ years. As a model railroader he achieved the designation of Master Modeler from the National Model Railroader Association. But, the Society remembers Don for his work at Heritage Park. Once CWMR agreed to restore the depot in exchange for a clubhouse, Don became a leading force to that end. Why would Don take on that challenge? Don grew up a few blocks from the Sussex RR Depot which was based on the same design as the Bancroft Depot.

In 1995 the Society awarded Don Kottke the Pine & Iron Award along with a Life membership for historic preservation in Portage County.

Don also had a hand in obtaining the semaphore and GB&W Caboose 617 that would be placed next to the depot. After completing the restoration of the caboose, Don and his crew of Fred Haase (Pine & Iron Award 2007) and Larry Misiewicz (Pine & Iron Award 2010) moved over to repaint the Pierce Building, followed by the General Store and Post Office. Then Don laid out the plans for the Heritage Park's sprinkler system and electrical rewiring of the Park.

In 2014 the Society named its Railroad History section on our web site in Don's honor.

Don passed away April 5, 2016. His leadership and above all his friendship is greatly missed.



**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
Model Railroad  
Show & Sale**

**Arctic Run 2020  
February 1-2  
Stevens Point**

**Holiday Inn - Convention Center Hotel**

**More...  
Space, Layouts  
and Vendors!**

1001 Amber Avenue  
Stevens Point, WI 54482

Saturday 9am-5pm  
Sunday 10am-3pm

Admission: \$4.00 Adults \$2.00 Ages 12-17  
[www.thecwmrarcicrun.com](http://www.thecwmrarcicrun.com)

Sponsored by Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders, Ltd., a non-profit educational organization. For information contact Don Anderson or Jim Miller.  
Jim Miller: 715-540-0265 or jimbro07@gmail.com  
Don Anderson: 715-340-8105 or cwm114@tds.net

Our proceeds, after expenses, are given to support other non-profit organizations.




Photo courtesy of Mike Weber



Tim Siebert, Don Kottke, Fred Haase and Larry Misiewicz at opening of the Caboose





# 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  
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Jim Abbrederis    Anton Anday  
Mary Egle        Milo Harpstead  
Dan Hoppe        Diane Casselberry  
Eric McFarland    Mary Beth Anday  
Sarah Scripps     Beverly West  
Jason Jones       Brad Casselberry  
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 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): \_\_\_\_\_

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Dec. 2019

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

### Online Payments

Now accepting online Dues Payments, Donations and Ticket Sales to Society Events.

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## Photo to Remember?

