

Official Publication of the Portage County Historical Society of Wisconsin

Our Year, So Far

Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic and its resulting limitations placed on activities, the Society has fallen behind in many areas that we had hoped to address this year.

In spite of everything, Heritage Park has been able to proceed with many building projects albeit slowed in some cases due to construction companies being restricted in what can be accomplished. The report on page 6 will outline some of what has been accomplished.

As of this writing, the Synagogue has two new furnaces and air conditioning installed. Other areas have not been so fortunate. The Society expects to get some or all of these areas taken care of next year.

The Fire House has installed a fence in the north and east side of the property. Dave Simonis, Curator, has continued work on the interior of the second floor. Other exterior work may be completed this year?

The Mill in Nelsonville is also behind in projects.

A major project is our Cataloging Project. It has lost an entire year! We'll work on getting things going early next year?

Several positives have occurred. Tim Siebert has completed the WWII displays at Heritage Park. The extra time allowed for refining the displays plus additional material came in. It always does!

Our collections continue to grow no matter what else is happening! Keeps Tim on his toes!

A project was started in mid-June by Jerry Rohlinger and Tim Siebert. Milo Harpstead, a 20+ year veteran of PCHS's Board is being interviewed. Milo is also a Professor Emeritus at UWSP's College of Natural History. The results of the ongoing interview process is 2-3 hours of HD videos; a history of the development of the CNR and, a work still in progress, his biography. By the way, Milo is 90-years old and still very active!

Everyone stay safe!



Society Events

Cancelled

Synagogue

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

Closed

Historic Fire House No. 2

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

Closed

Heritage Park

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

Closed

Rising Star Mill

Closed



President's Report

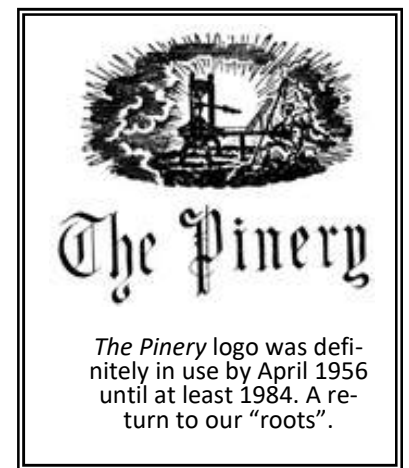
This summer has seen the various museums closed because of Covid-19. We do have visitors by appointment. However, the buildings being closed has allowed the Society to work on a number of projects at Heritage Park. Thanks to the efforts of Anton Anday, Jim Abbrederis and Jason Jones three major projects are either complete or have seen a great deal of progress.

The bell tower on the Church/Museum is now complete and all that needs to be done is to upgrade the ceiling just below the tower. This area allowed entrance to the men building the tower. The entire Church/Museum building has been scrapped and repainted. The print shop is finished and ready for an opening. Finally, the Post Office/Doctor's Office is being refurbished. This has involved lifting a portion of the floor that had partially sunk due to the decaying of supports. The floor itself needed to have a number of holes filled that had been cut into it by various owners. Electrical work and some heating ducts have been put in. The interior wall structures have been built to distinguish the Post Office from the Doctor's Office and the Dentist Office.



The World War II presentation is complete and is using four of the structures in Heritage Park. The Church/museum has the military side of the presentation. The displays are divided into various topics such as weapons, women, D-Day, communications, camp and a wall of the portraits of those men who gave their lives during the war. The Bancroft Depot has a display of the holocaust and other displaced persons. The Hie Corner School has a presentation of what we might call propaganda trying to generate support for the six war bond drives and cartoon presentations on various aspects of the war. The Engford House is being used to present the war at home with displays on what was expected of people at home-blackouts, victory gardens, rationing and recycling of paper and scrap metal.

As part of the World War II remembrance the Society has either reprinted or published several books having to do with men and women from this county. The Days of the Ching Pao by Malcolm Rosholt recounts both the story of the Flying Tigers (later the 14th Air Force) and his role in that organization. Oasis of Hope by Asbury Nix is his story of survival while a POW of the Japanese on the island of Corregidor. As You Were is a series of interviews of men who served in the 82nd Airborne during WW II and a bit into Korea. It contains one interview with a man from Plover. It is compiled by the Badger State Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association. The Victory Handbook was published by the government and contains recipes, games and advice on helping the war effort. Legacy of a Pearl Harbor Survivor is the story of Will Lehner as written by Patty Dreier. Stories of Portage County Soldiers is a compilation of newspaper articles of the time, interviews done years later and diary entries of the men who served from the county. It is compiled by Tim Siebert.



(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Earlier this year the Society had to replace the heating system in the Synagogue. In September we are going to install an air conditioning system to help protect the artifacts that are either stored or on display there.

We hope to be able to open next year with our new displays and “new” look to a number of our structures.

A One-Room Country School, Lee #5

By Milo Harpstead

Recently the Historical Society here in Portage County, Wisconsin asked me to write a newsletter article about my experience in a one-room school. I included a picture of the merry-go-round with the 1936-37 student body. When I received the August 4, 2005 issue of the Enterprise and saw picture of Perry family members on that very same merry-go-round, I knew that I had to send a note about it. I am sending a revision of the article that I referred to above, and am including names that are meaningful to Wilmot reader.

Our school was called Lee #5 and that is where I received the first 8 years of my public school education. In South Dakota, the country schools were not named after famous people or anything like that, but rather they simply had the township name plus the number representing the order that they were established. In the earlier years before I started in 1936, a school typically had a barn where the kids and the teacher left their horses during the day. Our school still had the barn, but we kids walked, rode a bicycle, or got a ride in the car pool to and from school. Our school also had a merry-go-around. By this time many of the schools had a septic tank in the basement that replaced the outhouses that all of us used at home. There was no electricity, and the teacher was responsible for making sure that the furnace kept us warm enough to be comfortable in our long underwear and sweaters. I don't recall ever being cold, but we often gathered around the floor grate when we came in from outside.

All of the country schoolteachers that I knew of were women. I had 3 teachers during my grade school years and all of them were from the Summit area at that time. Alice Kalberg was my teacher for grades 1 & 2, Vera Lowery (Kennedy) 3 – 7, and Hazel Binde for grade 8 in 1943-44. Sometimes the teacher



The names of the students on the merry-go-round in the fall of 1936 are from left to right:

Back row: Roy Larsen, Marvin Bohm, Ray Hansen, Dale Douglas Harpstead, Russell Hansen (behind the center post), Clifford Nielsen, Arnold Bohm (tall), Lorraine Aspelund, Inez Aspelund,

Front row: Delores Kuehn, Bob Hansen, Irene Larsen, Doris Nielsen, Milo Harpstead

(Continued on page 4)

commuted to home in the good weather or she might rent a room from nearby parents. In bad weather, Hazel Binde had a cot in the school where she could stay over night for a week. In addition to the cot she had a kerosene lamp and a small cabinet for her things. I don't remember if she had a kerosene stove. It must have been a boring and spooky ordeal with so little light in that big room. She must have looked forward to having the students arrive in the morning. Sometimes a girl in one of the upper grades would stay with her for a night, but that was uncommon. A teacher was normally paid about \$75 per month, but I think it went up to \$80 during WWII.

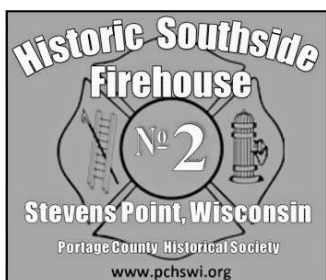
Discipline was paramount, and I remember my dad, who was on the school board, telling a teacher applicant that he expected her to provide good discipline. It was rare for a student to need punishment. I can recall only one time that I was punished by having to sit on a stool by the black board. The teacher had the recitation bench in the back of the room so that as she taught the reciting class, she could see the backs of the heads of the rest of the pupils. I had a new \$1.00 Westclock pocket watch with a shiny back, and I held it up as a mirror to watch the back of the room. That was a major infraction. As I was "doing time" on the stool, I pressed my tongue against the inside of my cheek in the direction of the teacher. One of the students on the recitation bench looked at me and smiled. The teacher turned around quickly, but not as quickly as I got my tongue back behind my teeth. This rapid reflex saved me. As I briefly meditated at her gravestone near those of my family on Memorial Day 2005, I could not help but recall this event. I learned a lot from her. May God rest her soul!

During my years at Lee #5 there were about 12 to 16 students for the entire 8 grades and four of us were in the same class. People move into and out of the district, but it was a pretty stable neighborhood. For a lot of the time, 4 of the students were Sioux, and most of the rest of us had at least one parent who was an immigrant from either Norway or Denmark. We were expected to get our studies completed during the school day, and I guess that we did. I do not remember ever having homework, and we certainly did not take textbooks home. We could, however, check out a book from the meager 3' by 4' library. In spite of what we lacked, we were at least as well prepared for high school as were the town kids who appeared to have greater learning opportunities.

Many times I have looked back with gratitude to those dedicated, hard working teachers in the one-room country schools. I should also pay tribute to the farmer parents of us students. Their drought and grasshopper plagued fields yielded an annual income of less than what the teacher was paid, at least during most of the 1930's.

Fire House No. 2

Dave Simonis



Our upcoming projects this year (waiting on our contractors) are some tuck-pointing to front (West) facade of building and the installation of a perimeter fence along the East and North East lot lines.

With the growing number of artifacts being housed in the old hay mow, we have procured 2 de-humidifiers and a commercial attic fan to help circulate the air around and control humidity levels inside the building. The upper day room walls were patched and repaired and then skim-coated this spring with plans for priming and painting this coming fall.

Rising Star Mill

Jim Walker

Talk about a lost summer! I hope you all have been remaining safe. While the ravages and uncertainty of the Covid virus rages throughout the world and here at home, we are fortunate, so far, that our local communities have not been overwhelmed by the outbreak but, our relatively sparse population can benefit us only so far. Be safe and exercise good practices.

I want to thank you all for your past volunteering and support of the RSM. Most unfortunately for our group, is that the well developed planning of our RSM Committee members had to be unfulfilled. We were well on our way to having a successful year of well planned events. Bummer! We have had to cancel all of our regularly scheduled events and several rentals. I spoke with Rick Simmons a few days ago and he confirmed that the Barns Of Portage County exhibit has been officially canceled. Obviously, our Open House is cancelled. The annual Hidden Studios Art Tour was previously cancelled.

A few days ago I could not stand looking at the amazing accumulation of dust and cobwebs that were developing in the mill, I went through the main room with the shop vac and tackled some of the dust. Made me feel better. I still need to hit the Feed Sack and the Office. There is less dust in the Grainery Room because there are no grain bins above it. Marge Krogwold did report that mice had damaged the warping on the loom. Sigh, Milly mouse must be desperate for nesting material.

Some of you may have noticed on our Facebook page that Local photographer and RSM Art Show exhibitor, Bob Rosen, has taken interior pictures of the mill and has created an artistic portfolio which will be featured, for sale, at the Gallery "Q" in downtown Stevens Point during September and October. He plans to donate a percentage of his sales to the mill. Good luck Bob.

I hope your interest in volunteering in the future has not been dampened by the circumstances of this year. You are a fun group. Let us stay in touch and remain interested in the Rising Star Mill.



THE RISING STAR MILL

Nelsonville, Wisconsin

INSIDE - OUT

A photographic Exploration


Photography by Robert Rosen




**RISING STAR
FLOURING MILL
1868**


THIS PROPERTY IS LISTED IN THE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR

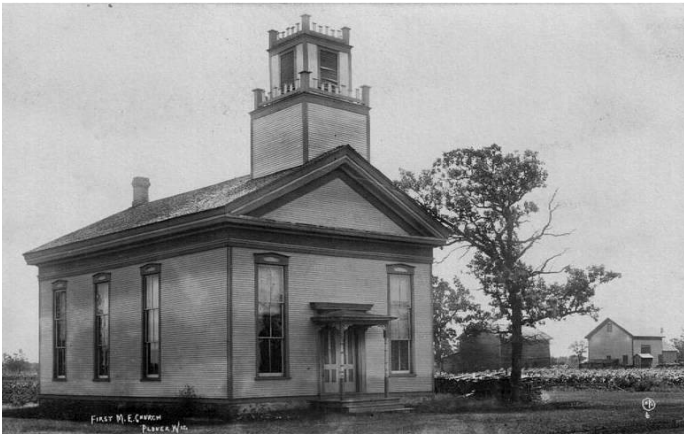
The Nelsonville Mill is one of the oldest mills in this part of the state and the last of its kind in Portage County.
On September 10, 1855, Jerome Nelson purchased land and water rights from Anna and Charles Stoltenberg on which to "construct and maintain a mill dam." Nelson, for whom Nelsonville is named, built the dam and sawmill in 1855. The Rising Star Flouring Mill was built in 1868 upon his return from serving in the Civil War. The Mill was operated as a business until 1984 after which, it became a museum of the Portage County Historical Society.





September - October
Gallery Q • 1108 Main Street • Stevens Point, Wisconsin





Progress at Heritage Park, 2020

The Church/Museum has been repainted. It has also received a replacement tower and a new metal roof.



The Bancroft Depot has been repainted and received a new metal roof.

Pierce Bldg/Agricultural Barn received a new extended roof over the main entryway into its "Milk House". Over the last couple of years it became apparent that run-off was causing an ice build-up on the ramp in front of the door. You can now enter the building safely in the winter.



The 40 et 8 vehicle has a new foundation to park on. A roof will be erected to protect the vehicle. Restoration will begin as soon as the roof is completed.





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
Treasurer: Janet Zblewski

Directors

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

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: _____

Sept. 2020

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 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.



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



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

Phone: 715-600-4930
E-mail: pchswi@gmail.com
www.pchswi.org

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

Electronic Service Requested



Photo to Remember

Old Main viewed from the north, ca. 1897.

