

OBHS News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society - Founded 1998

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Eddie Walman, Maple, alt.

From the President:

Just over a year ago a group of public spirited volunteers of this Wisconsin northern region dedicated themselves to the formation of an organization intent on preserving the history of the many small communities and cultures within an area now served by the Northwestern School District of Maple. We chose to call ourselves "the Old-Brule Heritage Society," (OBHS) because the political roots of most of these communities travel back through the history of an older town of Brule, founded in 1886-7, named for the famous Brule River landmark. This large old town of Brule covered an area from the Amnicon valley on the west to the Brule valley on the east, and from the shore of Lake Superior on the north, south into modern Lake Nebagamon. Its town hall was in the heart of Maple, a block from where Northwestern High School has stood since 1948-9. A common high school experience has bonded the communities in this region since then, and with the construction in recent years of the middle and the elementary school complexes we truly have become one cultural area, with Tigermania at times gripping most of us (and we hope sometime this will have to do with Northwestern golf!).

In the course of this past year we have established a record of history related activities which we believe has enriched this community, programs on the CCC, on Clevedon and other local archeological sites, on the Davidson Windmill. We haven't accomplished everything that needs to be done or all that we've wanted to accomplish, but we continue to move forward in getting systems and organization in place which will endure in carrying our heritages forward into a fast changing future. Large donations from the Town of Maple, and from the Maple Corner School Reunion Committee, and space from the Town of Maple, have given us a solid base on which to start. We sponsored our first scholarship, a web-site will be coming soon, and we are actively pursuing appropriate historical property. Our first fundraising

effort, the sale of local historical photos, mounted on magnets, has begun. Our Secretary deserves thanks for this idea.

We can applaud ourselves I feel for a job well done in reaching our one year milestone with the promise of even better things to come. It is only through the efforts of many that this progress could be made, and I thank you all here for your support, board members, membership at large, and the communities which have provided facilities in support of our events. Thanks go out, too, to Mr. Tom McKay in the State's Local History office.

We certainly hope that others will want to join us in our efforts with time, funds, skills and historical artifacts, documents and pictures. We will strive to warrant the public's full trust in all respects. See you at our next program!

Jim Pellman
(715) 363-2453

OBHS ANNUAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 18TH IN POPLAR

This year's annual meeting of the OBHS will be held Saturday, September 18 beginning at 12:30 at the Park in Poplar. We will have a family picnic in conjunction with the program and meeting. Sloppy Joes will be catered and members are asked to bring a dish to pass. Beverages, plates and utensils will be provided. On the program will be Joyce Bong Erickson who will update us on the Bong Memorial and who will share with us some Bong family heritage. In case of bad weather we will retreat to the Poplar Village Hall. Donations will be accepted.

OBHS SUPPORT FOR THE BRULE HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

Pianist **Tony Gowin** of the Wichita, Kansas, area volunteered to give a benefit performance August 14, 1999 in support of the **Brule History Research Group (BHRG)**, and that group, with help from the OBHS, created a memorable program which raised close to \$300 toward publication of Brule's history. Thanks again to **Tony** for the generous gift of his amazing artistry and for his support of local history.

Many of the brand new Y2K calendars published by the BHRG also sold. We encourage the purchase of these calendars, which give a hint of the history that group is preparing, proceeds all going toward their work.

Many members of the BHRG also are members

of the OBHS, and we will continue to give full support to their important writing and publishing efforts.

The photo displays created by **Nancy Moreland** and **Jim Pellman** in conjunction with the music program will be available for use by both of our groups, and have been designed to be safely transported.

Two more identical photo screens have been purchased and will eventually be filled with additional historical materials, organized around other historical themes.

LOCAL FOOD SHELF CALENDAR

Another calendar worthy of our support is that put out by the local **Rural Care and Share Food Shelf**. **Paul Marvin Hakkila**, who is on our board, is the president of that group and has been instrumental in that fundraising effort. Members of our society who donated art works to the calendar besides Paul are **Norma Lind**, **Nancy Moreland** and **Jim Pellman**. The Food Shelf serves an area that closely corresponds with that of the OBHS. Call **Mary Thoorsell** at **364-2513** for more information on purchasing the calendar.

FIRST YEAR DONATIONS

Over the past year the OBHS has received gifts of several historical items. The honor of first donation to our group goes to the **Ernest Erkkila family** of Lakeside who donated Ernest's anvil, forge, and many blacksmith tools, plus some Finnish books and documents.

Dennis Bartholomew of Superior donated a rug loom that had come into his family from the **Kortesmaki family** of Oulu. The loom had been built as a wedding gift by Mr. Kortesmaki for his wife around 100 years ago.

Gene Davidson, besides being one our speakers, also in recent weeks gave the Society two 1934 1 1/2 ton Ford trucks. Typical of earlier farm trucks used in this region, with restoration, one or both, will become part of the farm exhibit we want to complete. **Mike Lundeen** willingly provided his truck and labor to help us move the vehicles by trailer to the Maple Community Center grounds where **Danny Saari** tucked them into a corner,

awaiting their final site. Thanks again to the Town of Maple for their patience with us. Gene has other items of interest to our group that await a suitable site for display.

Helen and Harvey Johnson donated numerous old Finnish newspapers and documents.

Many thanks to all of these donors.

We have eyes open for a potential farm exhibit site. This will be a long term project and will take much fund raising and income for startup, annual maintenance and improvements. Leads on farm site, farm items, household and outbuilding, and smaller equipment are always welcome. We must consider easy access by the public, and we do not want to needlessly duplicate the efforts of anyone else locally.

OCTOBER MEETING ON THE 12TH IN CLOVERLAND PROGRAM BY LUOSTARI'S

Returning to our regular bimonthly meeting schedule in October, we have invited Vice President **Larry Luostari and his wife, Teacher, Pat Luostari**, to share with us photos and recollections of their recent trip to Europe and to Finland. They visited famous museums on their trip to lands which are the source of so much of our heritage. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday evening, October 12th, beginning at 7 pm in the Cloverland Town Hall.

MILLENIUM TREE ORNAMENTS/DAVIDSON MILL MAGNETS

OBHS Secretary, Artist, **Hope Swenson**, created two ornaments in the name of the OBHS for the "Millenium Tree." This Wisconsin Christmas Tree which will grace our nation's capital is being decorated with handmade ornaments of local material with local themes. Our ornaments depict the Davidson Mill, and a Lake Superior light house with water and boat. The deadline for these ornaments is October 20th in the Douglas

County Court House. Those interested can contact our Secretary for more info and entrance forms.

For those interested in one of the first of a series of the historical magnets, this edition with the Davidson Windmill, please contact Hope as well at her number listed below. This edition sells for \$1.00 each.

BUILDING A WEB-SITE

An important goal of our organization is to collect and maintain information and artifacts related to the history of this region. But just as important is sharing information about them and their contexts of use with the public. The new computer technology and the internet are valuable tools for accomplishing this public outreach. With this in mind we have had a committee in place looking at prospects for creating a web-site. Board members **Audrey Hakkila** and **Jackie Plunkett** have been investigating these prospects. Lightning strikes have slowed the process some, but recent meetings with **Mr.**

Dave Short, Village Clerk in Poplar, who is a computer expert, have given us hope that a web-site is not too far away. We are attempting to interest the Northwestern School District in partnering with us by hosting our site. We feel that we eventually will provide a wonderful site that students and the general public might access for information on local history and culture. We look forward to historical input from students and adults via e-mail and the internet. Our thanks to **Dave** who is volunteering his skills.

Anyone interested in joining the Old-Brule Heritage Society is encouraged to attend any of our meetings and programs; to join they may contact any member or the President at the return address below, or at (715) 363-2453, our Secretary, Hope Swenson, at 364-2296, or our Treasurer, Alice Christensen, at 364-2535. Our annual dues are \$15.00 for individuals, and \$25.00 for families, due at the time of our annual meeting in September. Higher levels of support are also available.

WELCOME!

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