

OBHS News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. ©2000
Founded in 1998 to Preserve and Share the Heritage of the Old-Brule Region.

Volume II, Issue 4

August 1, 2000

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NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 1:00 P.M., AT WAINO PIONEER CHAPEL IN BRULE

THE “GOLDEN GIRLS” WILL PAY US A VISIT AT OUR NEXT MEETING. JIM PELLMAN WILL TALK ABOUT IMMIGRATION INTO OLD-BRULE AND BRIEFLY ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIPS TO FINLAND AND TO TORONTO.

This special return of the Golden Girls proves that Finns have a fine sense of humor. They bring to life universal attitudes and antics of Finnish-American ladies in the early ethnic communities within the region. Some past members of the troupe are Norma Lind, Mary Ann Gronquist, Alice Christensen, Edith Warner, Minerva Johnson and JoAnne Miller. For a recent Duluth FinnFest they revived this tradition of homespun humor that the audiences had enjoyed in the Oulu Elementary School at the Juhannus Juhla (St. John's Day) or Midsummer Celebration held in late June, which the Oulu community members staged for many years. They held several performances throughout the area at the time of the FinnFest playing to rave reviews.

Jim Pellman will also talk briefly about the settlement of the Old-Brule region, and he will share some observations on his recent trips to Finland and to Toronto. The regular business meeting will follow. Everyone is welcome! Refreshments will be served.

See you there!

From the President:

Summers are usually busy for everyone, but this summer has been especially so for me. My recent jaunt to Finland left me in the typical jet lag daze for many days, and before recovery from that we were off to Toronto for an international FinnFest. We saw many familiar faces in Toronto, among them the members of the Järvenpää Choir, many of them supporters of our organization. We also visited with Leo and Ruth Heino and others from throughout the region. And upon return from Toronto we attended one day at the Finlandia Festival at Ironworld in Chisholm.

All of these trips might have to do with what some feel is a benign romance and petty nostalgia for ethnicity and roots. I think they are far more than this. As many of you know I am deeply interested in the fundamental importance of small groups or “tribes” to each of our lives. I am keenly interested in the changes small groups and individuals undergo under the pressures of modern life. We are living as guinea pigs within a great experiment, since we human beings have never lived with the degree of change, and the nature of change in communications and technology, that we now take almost for granted every day. Connection with the past enhances the sense of this change and helps define what it is we are sacrificing in “modernity.” Whether we like it or not we are immersed more and more in a synthetic and contrived environment.

*Just what of the past patterns in life should we retain at all costs? What patterns **must** we retain to remain a civilized people? Our trips give insight into what other people have resolved to preserve...hints of essentials for stability and full meaning in their lives...hints of the loves that have sustained them and their tribes.*

It is our task within the Old-Brule Heritage Society as we study the pasts of our communities to recognize these essential sustaining patterns and loves among ourselves.

Jim Pellman (715) 363-2453, <musketeer6@juno.com>

Watch for our Web Site!

Waino Chapel Has Full House

Velma Doby, Secretary of the Brule History Research Group, provides us with a summary of their recent program at the Waino Chapel.

Sunday, July 2, the Waino Pioneer Chapel was filled to capacity with an audience interested in the history of the 107 year old building, the only remaining landmark in the community of Waino. Reverend Duane Westfield, grandson of Alfred and Amanda Alexson and Henry and Sandra Aho, who had all played a significant role in building the church, presented a vivid account of the religious history of the church and its impact on life in Waino. Westfield who lives in Salem, MA teaches Humanities at Endicott College in Beverly, MA and has served as a Lutheran Pastor and Army Chaplain. He urges anyone who has memories or photos about the Waino Pioneer Chapel to share them with him or the Brule History Research Group.

Local and area members of the Jarvenpaa Choir which organized to perform at Duluth's FinnFest/USA in 1992 performed musical selections accompanied by Eleanor Pellman. Choir members were Irene Brazill, Nancy Kelleher, Melvin and Vivian Johnson, Sigrid Levanpa, Irene Parenteau, Delores Pellman and Toivo and Julia Rinnet. While not a member of the Choir, Ernest Ronn joined them for this performance.

The Järvenpää Choir includes several active members of our Old-Brule Heritage Society.

On display were the Old-Brule Heritage Society Photo Exhibit with additional new photos prepared by Nancy Moreland and Waino Pioneer Chapel memorabilia.

The Brule History Research Group wants to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this program and requests that anyone who took photos at the event to consider sharing them with the Brule History Research Group.

For everyone interested, the Brule History Research Group announces that it will hold its next meeting at the Brule Apartments on Monday, August 14, at 3 p.m.

Area History: No. 9

"Eräraivaajain matkavaivoista Early Pioneers' Difficult Trip by (Anna) Sofia Heikkurainen

Translation by Jim Pellman with help from Esther Pollari and Delores Pellman © 2000.

*This article came initially from the Finnish language **Työväen Osuustoimintalehti (Cooperative Builder)** of February 23, 1939, page 2, but it was first seen by the translator in one of the scrapbooks of Mr. Jack Anttila, long time mail carrier in the Maple area. It is one of those articles collected by Kalle Aine of Superior and the History Committee of the Brule Cooperative Park Association at the time of the 50th anniversary celebration of Finnish pioneer settlement in Douglas County.*

The earliest events the 79 year old author, Mrs. Johan Peter Heikkurainen, refers to date back to 1889. The Anttila child she mentions would have been Henry William (Anttila) Antilla, the first child born into the Maple Finnish settlement, then part of Old-Brule.

The Heikkurainen's had a sole child who did not survive. The 1910 Census taker Arthur Piefke has them arriving in America in 1882, but in 1920 H. W. Hiedeman has them arriving in 1884. They came from the Tornio River region in northern Finland. It is plain that they had friends and perhaps family in the earlier settlement in "Thomson country" in Carlton County just west of Duluth, as so many of the early Douglas County Finns did. Esther Pollari relates that in her early years when she worked as a domestic for the Ed Niemi family, which operated the Red and White Store in Maple, she would occasionally travel with the Niemi's to the Heikkurainen home for "lauluseura" (religious song services). The Heikkurainens were part of the early Laestadian religious circle of settlers in the region

The homestead of the Heikkurainens was located on Section 6 of Township 48 North, Range 11 West, land now owned by Mr. Walter Erkkila on the Section 6 Road off the Poplar River Road which runs north from Highway 13. Just north of this land was the farm of Isaac Rautio on which the "Renaissance" School was situated. This classic one room school house still stands but has been moved into the back yard of Walter Erkkila. Mike Gustafson's farm was west of the Heikkurainens' on the opposite side of the Middle River. The crossing must have been three-quarters of a mile north of Highway 13 on lands now owned by Charles and Roberta Edstrom. — Editor.

When we had been three years in Lakeside, in Douglas county, homesteading, there came from Duluth Henry Anttila with his family and bachelor, John Karvela, and they filed for land in Maple, for a place two miles from here. They lived with us until when they got their own cabin built.

Mrs. Anttila became ill in child birth. It was easy to foresee that in hers would be a fearful delivery. I was for the first time alone in helping to give birth as a midwife. We turned to God with all our hearts, being far removed from town, but everything went fine. After this I have been over many decades of time involved with doing midwife deliveries.

Returning back to when Mrs. and Mr. Anttila came to us. They came from Duluth along Lake Superior's ice, straight here to Wisconsin in March's early days. I with my husband Heikkurainen decided to leave to visit in Duluth and Thomson country, now that we had gotten a home sitter. We went along the ice, the same as those who had come. We were in Thomson country for a week and we came back to Duluth, and in the morning we left straight along the ice toward home. My husband prepared the "board" of the sled whereon we took food and other essentials, and we departed. My husband took from the shore a small cane and said that I should take it in my hand in case it was needed.

In Superior's channel there already was weakened ice. It was our intention to come along the ice. We were far out on the open lake, and to me the ice looked very weak, and I said to my husband, that with the sled with us, indeed, to test the ice. He when dropped the stick onto the ice; indeed, there came a hole; the cane went through. I don't remember that we said anything to each other, when quickly we began to turn around. When I reach this point always my heart remembers my thoughts, that if God has at least seen us, that our grave is in Lake Superior, indeed, it will be so, and that on resurrection day God will restore us to life from there above. My eyes fill with tears with this remembrance. Also I thought that if

God would indeed lighten us that the ice would carry us, we would make it to land. I turned to Him and we made it to Wentworth.

Still there were six miles yet to reach home. My husband had picked from the store an axe so that in case there were watery places he might cut down some trees so that we need not have to wade in water, not knowing if we might need it, and thus we arrived at around twelve noon at Mr. Mike Gustafson's farm. We were already afraid of the passage over the Middle River when we left from Duluth. The trip demanded that we cross over the river regardless of whether the river was flooding and if there ran a hard current. Gustafson said there was no way to get over. My husband went to see the river and returning said that the river flow was hard and there was a strong current, but he believed it was passable.

Thus we ventured forth, Gustafson with us, being on the river and decided. Heikkurainen said that "Indeed I hope from there to make the crossing and I will take the food articles." I said for Gustafson to depart ahead of me and I would get a tight hold of his jacket from behind, or I didn't want to start over at all. Gustafson replied that I should not start to grab him at all if we were to succeed in getting over, and that if I were to grab him at all we would fall together into the river. Many times Gustafson marveled at our having made the passage when the wood was so weak.

So this is how it has been and has gone; I don't remember in any of those times anything of sorrow. We being young at that time and the people growing in number. There were many cheerful occasions to gather, believing our sins had been forgiven, our bodies would rise up and receive eternal life, and always I have believed it so.

--Mrs. Sofia Heikkurainen, Poplar, Wis.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Area History: No. 10</h2>

EARLY FARMING IN OLD-BRULE

*At one time it was expected that farming would flourish in Douglas County, and for a time Old-Brule's farmers helped the region live up to those expectations. Even before the final primordial white pines were removed by Weyerhaeuser and Hines, there was an effort to fill the region with yeoman farmers. The Twin Ports outpost was booming and these newly established centers of industry and transportation which spawned Superior's earlier motto, "Where Rail Meets Sail," provided a natural market for everything that surrounding farmers could produce. **The Inland Ocean**, a Superior newspaper from that time, commissioned a series of articles by the Superintendent of Douglas County Schools, Mr. G. G. Williams, who was to examine farming prospects in the county. The following is the 104 year old article as it appeared, and its amazing historical value to the Old-Brule Heritage Society speaks for itself.—Editor.*

INLAND OCEAN, Superior, Wisconsin, Saturday, **March 14, 1896**:

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OF DOUGLAS COUNTY

by G. G. Williams, Douglas County Superintendent of Schools

his Fourth Paper treating of "the town of Brule-Most Thickly Settled of all the Towns:

The map shown herewith does the town of Brule injustice in that it shows the south half of 47-10 as belonging to Nebagamain when in fact it belongs to Brule. This town is reached from the shores of Lake Superior on the north to the southern line of town 47 on the south, a distance of about eighteen miles, and includes in its limits an area of about six and one-half governmental townships. Though in size the smallest town in the county, it undoubtedly contains the largest number of persons actually engaged in farming, most of whom are getting in pretty comfortable shape. Good houses and barns are surprisingly numerous.

THE SOIL.

The soil as a whole is of a heavier character than that in the towns already described. Near the lake shore red clay abounds but farther south it grows lighter and in some parts is quite sandy.

The Northern Pacific railway passes through the town as shown on the map herewith, and is paralleled on the south by the South Shore and Atlantic road from one to four miles distant. With these two railways passing through the town and a number of boats doing a local business along the lake shore in summer time every part of the town has easy access to Superior markets.

THE ROADS.

The roads of this town mostly run north and south from the railroad stations. One, the Bayfield, passes east through the town on the line between townships 47 and 48. This is passable but not in first rate condition for a summer road, but in winter is all right. A new road on the section line a mile north of this was opened last fall from near Wentworth westward, intersecting Grand avenue a mile and a half east of South Range. When finished this will in all probability be the main traveled road from Brule into Superior, at least for some time to come.

The town has expended a good deal of money on its roads, levying for that purpose more than \$9,000 for the year 1895. The roads are getting better every year but are not yet in a condition favorable for light driving, though some of them are approaching such condition.

GOOD SCHOOLS.

Fourteen well equipped schools supply the means for obtaining a good common school education to the children of these pioneer farmers. It is quite likely that another school will soon be established in the southern part of town 47-10, [maybe Winneboujou School] as there are a number of settlers in that part of the town whose children have no means of attending.....

JOHN BRYDEN'S FARM.

Probably the name most familiar to the public in connection with farming in this town is that of John Bryden [BrI'-den]. He lives half a mile north from Poplar on the Bayfield road in the valley on the west bank of Poplar river. He it was who was in charge of the vegetable exhibit from Douglas county at the state fair last fall that won first premium. On the thirty-five acres that he has under cultivation he raises potatoes, wheat, oats, corn, beans, peas, and all garden vegetables. He is the man who raises cucumbers two feet in length and never fails to have a good exhibit of farm and garden products at the county fair.

SOME BIG YIELDS.

P. A. Peterson, secretary of the town board of school directors, lives at Poplar on the sw 1/4 of Sec. 6-47-11. He has twenty-five acres under cultivation, a house 24x24, barns, etc. His hay yielded two and one-half tons to the acre last year, and oats grew as tall as himself-nearly six feet-and very thick on the ground. From one and one-fourth acres he raises three hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes. From three-fourths of an acre that was burnt off by forest fires the year before, he raised one hundred and twenty-five bushels of turnips. The seed was sown on the ground without any preparation of the soil, just as the fire left it. Clover flourishes there and all garden stuff was fine.

J. M. Peterson, J. M. M. Peterson and Chairman Tom Doherty live in the same section-6-47-11-and have been successful in their farming operations.

GOOD LAND FOR CEREALS.

J. M. Peterson has from thirty to thirty-five acres cleared and besides the crops named, has raised fall wheat with fine results. J. M. M. Peterson has about thirty acres that he cultivates. He has raised barley, rye, and spring wheat with perfect success. Cereals have never been grown to any great extent because as yet there have been no machines for threshing the grain. Sufficient has been done, however, to demonstrate that both soil and climate are well adapted to the production of each crop.

Besides attending to his duties as chairman of the town and running a store, Tom Doherty finds time to tickle the soil till it laughs all sorts of vegetables and grains in rich profusion.

W. J. Wiberg cultivates forty acres. Carl Malmquist twenty-five acres, Charley Asker twenty acres and Gust Johnson fifteen acres, all in section 12-47-12. Mr. Wiberg has a two and one-half story house 25x35 and a good barn 20x32. These men have all raised crops like those already mentioned and with the same gratifying results.

HE LIKES VARIETY.

C. S. Howard, merchant, postmaster and ticket agent at Wentworth, is likewise a horny handed son of toil who spends his leisure moments and surplus profits leveling the primeval forest and subduing the virgin soil. His reward is several acres of fertile land that produces rich crops of potatoes, hay and vegetables.

Andrew Polsky is a man small of stature but one who ?keeps ? ? there all the time. He has for his own the ne 1/4 of section 10-47-12, and has brought under subjection twenty acres of forest land which yields good crops of hay, oats, peas, potatoes, etc. He also raises tobacco that he declares smokes equal to the finest Havana leaf. Three streams of pure water cross his place but his road to market he says is a "blamed poor one."

Arthur Pifke has cleared about ten acres on the nw of the ne of Sec 34-48-12. The soil is red clay, the surface level, and he raises mostly hay and potatoes because they find a ready market.

HAY A GOOD PAYING CROP.

C[arl]. J. Jones cultivates about thirty acres on the nw 1/4 of 12-47-12. Hay is the principal crop he raises because there is always a good market for it. Oats, peas, cabbage, etc., do well. Oscar Lindquist [Lundquist?] has about thirty-five acres cleared on the nw 1/4 of 8-47-11. He has a good house 20x35 and two barns 20x50 and 16x25. The soil is fertile and good crops of hay, oats, wheat, barley, rye, and all kinds of vegetables are produced.

In 22-48-12 is another settlement in which good success has been achieved in raising nearly everything they have tried, including oats, barley, rye, peas, timothy, clover, tobacco, onions, potatoes, rutabagas, carrots, etc. Edwin Johnson, A. J. Modene [Modin] and Theodore Beggren [Bergren] live on this section. The character of soil and nature of the surface is practically the same on ?examination?, sand and clay mixed, and the crops raised are the same. The gentlemen named have under cultivation about eighteen, sixteen and twenty acres respectively. Field peas do well and are a profitable crop to raise. They have never failed. Timothy and clover yield three tons to the acre and tobacco grows to the height of six feet. These men all have good large houses and barns. Johnson's house is 24x32, barn 20x100 and his granary 18x24.

AROUND MAPLE.

At Maple, on section 2-47-11, lives Thomas Nephew, the indomitable Frenchman, politician, farmer, landlord and postmaster. Twenty-five acres of rolling hardwood land have been brought under subjection and made to yield crops of hay and vegetables. Two tons of hay and one hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes to the acre are common yields. A few rods from Mr. Nephew in the se corner of 34-48-11, lives the taxidermist, John L. Davis, who raises hay, corn, oats, wheat, and all kinds of vegetables on the twenty-five acres that he cultivates. The soil in this vicinity has some sand in it that makes it easier to work and a little earlier than the red clay farther north and west.

FINNISH SETTLEMENTS.

The Finlanders living in this town comprise a large and important part of its population. They are an ingenious, frugal and industrious people who are slowly but steadily clearing up farms. The greater number of them live in town 48, ranges 10 and 11, but a few are in 48-12 and other parts of the town. It is about nine years since the first ones took their land and every year since then others have been coming. Very few of them had any money and were consequently obliged to go away to earn money to buy necessities for themselves and their families. Because of this necessity they have not done as much clearing as they otherwise would, but under the circumstances it appears to me they have done very well indeed. They built with reference to future needs. One thing peculiar to these people is the fact that in nearly every instance they have built bath houses. The typical Finlander considers his bath house a necessary part of his belongings and he is not satisfied with a small room in his house either, but builds for this purpose a house by itself ten or twelve feet square. In this he revels in frequent "washings" that partake of the nature of a Turkish bath. This custom was taken into Finland in early times from Turkey through Russia and remains to the present time.

SMALL FARMS THE RULE.

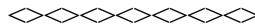
The lands taken by the Finns are mostly on the red clay soil and therefore hard to clear and heavy to work, but they are making commendable progress in subduing it, and I doubt not will ere long accomplish results now deemed impossible by most people. As a rule the amount cleared runs from five to ten acres per farm but Matt Hendrickson, on section 12-48-12 has about thirty acres; Eric Kergas [Kirkas], sec. 14-48-11, twenty-five acres, and Aleck Beck, sec 13-48-10 over twenty acres cleared. These are the largest with which I am familiar.

The crops raised are generally about the same. Hay, oats, potatoes, and garden vegetables are the principal ones. Both clover and timothy do well and yield abundant crops. Wheat has been tried in a few places, enough to demonstrate that a good quality and large yield can be expected from the soil when properly tilled. Attempts in a small way, have been made to raise corn, but not with much success. Something can be done in favorable years with very early varieties of sweet corn, but there is little encouragement for trying other kinds. Small pieces of good tobacco have been raised by different ones.

200 FINNISH VOTERS

There are probably not fewer than two hundred Finlanders, voters in the town besides women and children. I give the names and locations of a few and they will serve to give in a general way the location of others. Isaac Adams lives on section 14. August Wentela on section 13: Herman Koski and Jacob Koski on section 12: John Tuura section 13, and John Lahti, section 12: all in town 48-10. John Carvala; Henry Anttila and Abram Harju live on section 10: Jacob and John Pellinen section 15: Gus Luster [Luostari] on section 3, and Robert Hikki [Heikki] on section 9: all in town 48-11. Eric Hanson and Jacob Davidson live in 48-12 on the banks of the Amnicon on section 8, where the road from East Superior strikes the river.

G.G. WILLIAMS.



OUR ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD NEXT MONTH TENTATIVELY AT THE MAPLE COMMUNITY CENTER ON SEPTEMBER 13TH.

**Welcome New Members Ron and Karen Simpson of Augusta, GA
and Robert Aho of Duluth!**

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 call him 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, payable at the time of our annual meeting in September. Higher levels of support are also available.

New Members and Visitors are WELCOME!

Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc.
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In the rush to publication I overlooked the obvious, my list of thank yous, which will appear in longer version in the next news letter. Anticipating that I will briefly thank Rachel Friedrich for her presentation at our last meeting held in June. I would also like to thank her teacher and member Pat Luostari who introduced Rachel and guided her research. Thanks, too, to Rachel's mother, Gloria, for supporting her daughter's efforts and for joining us at our meeting.

It was also our pleasure to have in attendance guests historians Mr. John Altshool of New Mexico and Dr. Frank Telewski of East Lansing, Michigan, who are doing vital research on the activities of Frederick Weyerhaeuser in our region. We hope to see both again with the fruits of their long time efforts.

And last, but far from least, a THANK YOU to Hope and Cliff Swenson who generously offered their home and boundless hospitality for the day!

Also not named among the Golden Girls earlier listed is Jean Mattson.